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THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE
INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Founded 1950

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Hon Secretary & Treasurer	MICHAEL CRAMPTON	19 Carrholm Crescent Chapel Allerton Leeds LS7 2NL Tel: 0113 2689556
Magazine Editor	MALCOLM MACFARLANE	1 Hulme Hall Avenue Cheadle Hulme Cheadle Cheshire SK8 6LN Tel: 0161 485 2782
U.S. Representative	F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS	5608 North 34th Street Arlington, Virginia 22207, USA Tel:. (703) 241-5608
Australian Representative	DAVID CURRINGTON	1 Ivy Street Greenacre, NSW Australia 2190
Mainland Europe Representative	ETTY GITS	Hoboken Straat 559 4826 EJ Breda Holland Tel: 076 - 5719 804
CD's/Records	JIM REILLY	27 Beaulieu Road North End Portsmouth Hants PO2 ODN Tel: 01705 666677
Films	KEITH PARKINSON	"Meadowcroft" Houghtons Lane Eccleston St. Helens WA10 5LD Tel: 01744 22248
Radio & TV (Current Developments)	BERT BISHOP	Tideway, 100 Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 6AJ Tel: 01621 742144
Radio & TV (Research)	LIONEL PAIRPOINT	86 Ellesmere Avenue Mill Hill London NW7 3HD Tel: 0181 959 3394
Photographs	RON BOSLEY	10 Fountains Avenue Simonstone Lancashire BB12 7PY Tel: 01282 779924

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Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 1996 are:-

UK	£8 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£9 per annum
USA and Canada	US $20 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$30 per annum
South America	£11.50 per annum

All remittances should be sent in **£ sterling** payable to 'Michael Crampton - ICC' with the exception of (a) U.S. and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars (c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Etty Gits in £ sterling. For addresses see inside front cover.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.
Other Correspondence concerning membership or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Hon. Secretary/Treasurer.

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EDITORIAL

As we go to press, I have just returned from my latest adventure in the USA and I will give fuller details in the next BING. Suffice to say at this stage, that I had a great time in Spokane where Don Eagle showed me the Crosby sights and where Stephanie Edwards took me behind the scenes at Gonzaga. I picked up a tremendous amount of detail on Bing's days at Gonzaga which will be incorporated in the diary of Bing's life we shall be publishing in due course. I was even interviewed by People magazine whilst at Gonzaga and apparently this is a nation-wide publication in the USA with a large circulation. I shall be interested to see what they print, if anything. Visits to Tacoma and Del Mar plus meetings with Gary Hamann, Charles Baillie and briefly Jack Souther also took place. Members attending the Leeds gathering will have the pleasure (?) of seeing a 15 minute video of my Crosby tour if Michael Crampton allows it.

I hope that you like our cover picture of Bing golfing at the Temple Golf Club, Maidenhead on September 18, 1952 as he practised for the famous match with Hope, Ted Ray and Donald Peers on the following Sunday. You will find an article describing one of Bing's later golf matches in the UK further on in this edition. Sadly we have to tell you of the death of Eric Griffiths, one of the stalwarts of the Crosby scene, and Bert Bishop has written some nice words which go for us all.

The news from Gary Giddins is that after various delays he is now working full time on his book on Bing which promises to be the best researched book on Bing ever published. We certainly do not want a starry eyed view of Bing but the importance of his contribution to the show business scene in the twentieth century deserves a thorough and balanced evaluation of his life and times which hopefully Gary will provide. If I had to guess, I would say that it will be well into 1997 before the book is published. In fact, it might even make sense to bring it out to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of Bing's death. Ken Barnes is approaching EMI to see if they will bring out a box set of all of his United Artists material to tie in with the anniversary as well. Incidentally, Gary Hamann's book has sold quite well and a review of it is also contained in this edition.

It has not proved possible to find anyone to take over BINGthings Society following the death of Bob Lundberg and as many of their members may be left high and dry without a magazine, Joyce Lundberg has kindly released the membership list to us as well as to Club Crosby and to Hobie Wilson's club. Wig Wiggins has written to all former members of BINGthings Society (who were not already members of the ICC) giving details of our club and we welcome any of Bob's subscribers who may be reading this magazine for the first time. Our membership generally is expanding well thanks to various initiatives such as advertising on the MCA CD of 'Top O' The Morning' and in other clubs' periodicals. It really is

amazing how much is going on connected with Bing bearing in mind it is almost 20 years since his passing.

Copy date for the next magazine is October 25th. but early submission of articles would be appreciated so that we can ensure that members get their magazines before Christmas.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Secretary / Treasurer's Report

"It pays to advertise" runs the old adage and that certainly applies this issue as we welcome several new members who learnt of the ICC's existence from their magazine "Perfectly Frank" the journal of the Sinatra Society. One of their members has written from Germany and we hope to include his name in the next issue of BING. We are pleased that it has been possible to make reciprocal arrangements about advertising with several societies.

NEW MEMBERS

UNITED KINGDOM We extend a warm hand to:- ALEX ALLAN (Whitley Bay), RICHARD COID (Glasgow), PAUL KEEGAN (London), GEORGE HUGHS (Tillicoultry). HILDA MOSS (Bristol), ANDREW SMITH (Leeds), ERIC SWITHENBANK (Ilkeston), MR M BUTLER (Cheltenham), ANDREW MANGAN (Dublin), MR J E DEVENPORT (Sheffield), MR N W WATERMAN (Dumfries), B. LANE (Annerley) and MRS J LAWRENCE (Wimborne, Dorset).

USA

ROBERT DEFLORES and RON HALL are the two people behind the wonderful initiative at FESTIVAL FILMS which has brought us some rare footage on Bing and we are delighted to welcome them as members of the ICC. Robert and Ron's dedication in bringing us Bing's films on video is an enterprise which deserves strong support from members of the ICC. We welcome too ROBERT NICORA (Lapeer, Mich.) and M O JACKSON (Sunnyvale, California) and as I go to print, Wig tells me he is sending details of another 50 new members in the USA! Greetings to you all and I shall supply further details in the next magazine.

DONATIONS

We are delighted to record a very kind donation which we have received from MICHAEL COLLINS and we wish Michael well as he ministers to seamen offshore in the USA. Welcome too were donations from:- NICO SEYP, HENDRIK TIEDMANN, TONY SLAUGHTER, THOMAS MOONEY, DAVE NEWBOLD, THOMAS HIRSCHMANN. Your support is much appreciated.

DEATHS

Just as I was preparing to write these few words for BING 113, I received the sad news that ERIC GRIFFITHS had died. Eric was a pillar in the world of Crosbyana and few had greater knowledge than he of Bing's recordings both commercial and non-commercial. Eric was ever helpful and I valued his advice, help and support for almost 40 years. Despite failing health, Eric made the long journey to Leeds in recent years and we are pleased that he came our way. We extend our sincere condolences to Joan at this sad time. CYRIL PARKER who died in May 1996 was another long time member of the club and we express our sympathy to his family. Finally, we are sorry to record the death of FRED THOMPSON from Coventry. Fred was a life-long Bing fan and his widow Gladys will be remaining as a member of the ICC. Our thoughts go out to Gladys and her family.

BING CROSBY in the 30's

Twenty copies arrived from Gary Hamann and 19 have been dispatched to members who ordered them so only one remains for sale at £15. Highly recommended. First come, first served.

LEEDS 1996

This will be our 31st meeting and we hope that many new members will venture to Leeds to sample the delights of the annual meeting and dinner. Details elsewhere in the journal. Until then or December my thanks to all for making the ICC a worthy and enterprising club, a club with which members are proud to be associated.

Michael Crampton

Anne Shelton Personal Memorabilia Auction

We were circulated with the catalogue for this auction which took place in July. I couldn't see the 'two bob piece' with which Bing bought a kiss from Anne in 1944 but there was an interesting item at lot 452.

A personal presentation album of six 78 records from Bing Crosby to Anne Shelton. White leather bound album with gild decorative line border front and back, gilt impressed in top left hand corner "To Anne 10th November 1944"; inside front cover inscribed in Bing Crosby's hand "To Anne, my partner from the war days. Love Bing Crosby"; the records in slip in sleeves comprise: Sweet Leilani, The One Rose, White Christmas, Let's Start the New Year Right, Victory Polka, Pistol Packin' Mama, Adeste Fideles, Silent Night, Amor Amor, I'll Be Seeing You, Going My Way, Swinging On a Star.

A photo of the item indicates that the records are Brunswick discs. I have not heard what price the item fetched.

Down Australia Way

We know about the Leeds meeting and we can read elsewhere about a Crosby gathering in Essex but here's news of our Australian members getting together last December. The photograph shows (left to right) Back: Allan Morton, Col Gillies, Smart Lord, John Edwards; Front: Neil Colombari, Bruce Saunders, John Dever, David Currington.

Australia remains a fertile area for Crosbyana with two clubs in existence and we are steadily increasing our own membership there under David Currington's stewardship.

Internet Update

Frans van der Kolff is continuing his 'surfing of the net' and has drawn our attention to several more Bing items.

It appears that in the USA there is software called TVNow which allows you to search TV schedules on over 80

channels available in the States and print out your own personal viewing guide. Frans naturally entered the name 'Bing Crosby' and the software produced a detailed schedule for March of 8 films featuring Bing plus a Bing Crosby show from the Nostalgia channel. Very helpful indeed and it is understood that a similar program is being considered for European and British TV channels. This would be marvellous and would ensure that we didn't miss any of Bing's appearances on the box.

Also on the Internet, Frans came across an arrangement for guitar of 'White Christmas' which he downloaded and in addition the following entry:

Ice Cube Vs. Bing Crosby

Please feel free to voice your opinion on the matter: If given the choice between listening to Ice Cube rap or Bing Crosby singing his memorable hits....who would you pick and why? We promise you won't receive any unsolicited mail, so don't be discouraged from participating!!

Amazing! Pity I didn't have the Internet as I could have let them have 2000 words on the subject. Incidentally Frans tells me that Shaun Lippy (whom he mentioned in his article in BING 112) has added the addresses of the Crosby clubs to his Internet pages which will hopefully bring us some new members.

A Celebration of the Music and Stars of the 1950s

This event is scheduled to take place on Sunday, October 27 at the Leeds Hilton. There will be displays and videos on a large screen which will include a tribute to Alma Cogan, who died in October 1966. The ICC will be taking a stand. Admission is £8 per person and the hotel will provide accommodation at a modest rate for those attending the event.

LETTER FROM LESLIE

I have been pleased to see the new CD 'Top O' The Morning' which is mentioned elsewhere in BING and well done at last to MCA in the USA (and Wig Wiggins) for the issue. Sorry to note that MCA in the UK do not seem to want to issue the CD as I am sure that it would be a commercial success over here as well. What a shower! However, it is pleasing to see that we may have another MCA album with Bing and the Andrews Sisters later in the year. It almost seems churlish to ask for more but going through my correspondence, I do detect a strong desire for a good many of Bing's little gems to be considered for release as well. Many records have been unavailable for years and I refer to tracks such as the delightful John Scott Trotter - Tom Adair composition 'Any Town Is Paris When You're Young', 'Does Your Heart Beat For Me', 'So Would I' and 'My Heart Goes Crazy' with Russ Morgan. and his Orchestra, and 'The Things We Did Last Summer' with Jimmy Dorsey. 'I'll Remember April' was always a much liked Bing recording as was the John Scott Trotter - Carroll Carroll song made up of melodious tones, namely 'Moonlight on a White Picket Fence'. The same can readily be said for 'When the White Azaleas Start Blooming' and 'The Girl With The Pigtails In Her Hair'.

Other titles much desired are 'I've Got To Fall In Love Again', 'Imagination', 'Golden Earrings', 'Why Can't You Behave', 'Pass That Peace Pipe' and a recording that blends the voice of Bing so wondrously with the very fine accompaniment of the JST orchestra, 'Sentimental Music'. We must not forget 'The Magic Window' which has a nice melody as well as being a touching little song. But will the Crosby buffs be in luck for the future? Bing told me during our many conversations that whilst he hoped for a re-issue policy for his recordings, he knew that younger personnel would come into MCA who naturally would not know anything about his career. It was Bing's great success in the record markets for many years that helped make MCA Records the powerful world-wide organisation that it is today but there is no sentiment in business. Bing was a shrewd businessman and he knew that a record company has to make money if it is to thrive and MCA will only issue albums if they have a good prospect of commercial success. Obviously the MCA people have not been convinced that Bing is still a 'seller' and let's hope that the success of the current CD in the States will encourage a change of stance and perhaps we might see some of the little gems I mentioned. Also let's give a vote of thanks to the various smaller outlets who have come out with 'out of copyright' material on their CDs.

As one who has been around long enough to respect the old adage that everyone has their own point of view, I read Clive Menadue's article in the last BING about the Musical Autobiography set carefully but I did not agree with it. Since there is no datum line to work from, Clive's opinion on this set of recordings is only as good as the next person's and has to be taken as such. Clive will know that Buddy Cole was rated by Bing as one of the most colourful people to work with and for me, their joint association has always given me pleasant listening. That certainly goes for the Musical Autobiography as well.

I am pleased to see that Desmond Carrington has taken over the Crosby Corner on his BBC Radio 2 broadcasts. The programme is now produced by an outside company, Foldback Media Limited, and I have struck up a nice little relationship with Derek Clipsham, Desmond's associate, by providing him with some of Bing's compact discs for their library which had previously been generously supplied to me by members Ernest Sutkowski and Barry Whittingham. The medium of radio is where Bing's flag can be kept flying best in order that he can be well remembered and both Stan White and myself give praise to the various radio producers and presenters who regularly feature Bing. Thanks fellas.

Leslie Gaylor

BING IN THE USA

Wig sends us details of the Bing scene in the USA

Bing's Films on Television

Many of Bing's films are becoming regular features on television stations and cable networks around the United States. Although his appearances on major networks such as ABC, CBS and NBC usually are limited to holiday periods like Easter, the Fourth of July or Christmas, cable channels such as American Movie Classics (AMC), Turner Classic Movies and Showtime feature Bing on a more regular, year-round basis. In particular, AMC presents several of Bing's films every month — in complete, uncut versions of the highest quality without commercials — which makes AMC an excellent source for adding films to our video collections that have not yet been released on commercial tapes by Paramount Pictures and the other major studios. During the first half of 1996, the following films were shown by American Movie Classics:

JANUARY
Blue Skies
A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court
Holiday Inn
Road to Singapore
FEBRUARY
Mr. Music
Say One For Me
MARCH
Blue Skies
Going My Way
Holiday Inn
Just For You
Road to Zanzibar
Variety Girl
APRIL
Emperor Waltz
Mr. Music
Road To Morocco
Road to Singapore
Road to Utopia
Road to Zanzibar
MAY
A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court
Mack Sennett Shorts
The Magic of Bing Crosby
Mr. Music
Road to Morocco

Bing's New Compact Discs From MCA and Laserlight

MCA's release of Bing's new Irish CD "Top O' The Morning" (MCAD-11406) just before St. Patrick's Day has resulted in a best-seller throughout the United States, and it is bringing many new members into the ICC, thanks to the reference to our organisation included in the "Top O' The Morning" booklet. I am now working with MCA Vice President, and fellow-ICC member, Andy McKaie on a two-CD package scheduled for release before Christmas which will include all of the songs that Bing recorded for Decca with the Andrews Sisters.

Laserlight has released a new series of "American Legends" CDs featuring popular and jazz musicians who have been honored with postage stamps by the U.S. Postal Service over the past few years. With full-color enlargements of the stamps on the CD booklet covers, this series makes a striking appearance in record stores. Bing not only has his own CD (12-732), but he also appears on single tracks on the CDs honoring Louis Armstrong (12-734), Al Jolson (12-738) and Ethel Merman (12-741).

Festival Films' Complete Mack Sennett Shorts

Sixty-five years after they were filmed in Hollywood, complete uncut versions of all six of the shorts that Bing made for Mack Sennett finally are available to Crosby collectors, thanks to our fellow members at Festival Films, Ron Hall and Bob DeFlores. We no longer have to put up with poor quality, chopped-up versions of these historic shorts, and we also now have available the full version of "Dream House" (rather than the truncated "Crooner's Holiday") and the previously-missing "One More Chance" for our video collections, thanks to Festival Films' diligence and desire to preserve these important examples of Bing's earliest efforts before the movie cameras.

And there is more to come! Ron Hall has informed me that they will be issuing another video of some of the rarest of Bing's early short films and clips from other Hollywood sources in time for the Christmas season. Also, if you are a collector of Bing's movie posters, write to Festival Films for their flyer about six stunning full-color reproductions they now have for sale of posters from Mack Sennett, "Mississippi", "Anything Goes" (1936), "Dixie", "Road to Utopia" and "White Christmas". *(Editor: Further details follow)*

"State Fair" Reaches Broadway

After a seven-month nation-wide tour, the stage version of Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical "State Fair" finally reached Broadway on March 27, where it opened at the Music Box theater to mixed reviews. The cast, including John Davidson and Kathryn Crosby as "Ma and Pa Frake", was generally praised by the New York critics, but the show itself was described as "old-fashioned" and "out-of-date". The critics do not expect "State Fair" to remain on Broadway much beyond the summer vacation season, when New York is visited by large numbers of out-of-town tourists for whom this type of "All-American" musical might be more appealing than other contemporary Broadway shows.

Nostalgia Television Programs

In BING 112, I included my reviews of the first three of Bing's ABC television specials that were rebroadcast on the Nostalgia cable network in the United Stares over the past year. My reviews of the final four programs follow.

Program Four

The Bing Crosby Show for Oldsmobile (October 5, 1960)
with Rosemary Clooney, Johnny Mercer, Carol Lawrence, Dennis, Philip and Lindsay Crosby and Nelson Riddle's orchestra.

Another simple opening, with Bing standing to sing a chorus of 'On The Street Where You Live' which evolved into a parody to introduce Rosemary Clooney ('Let's Take An Old Fashioned Walk'), Johnny Mercer ('Lazy Bones'), Carol Lawrence ('Lullaby Of Broadway') and the Crosby Brothers ('Daddy') to a bouncy beat from the orchestra.

Bing then sang a partial chorus of 'I Want To Be Happy' and moved to a table with Rosemary Clooney to begin a 'progression game' of songwriters and their songs, later joined by Johnny Mercer and Carol Lawrence to complete the cycle. Songs included 'Great Day', 'I Found A Million Dollar Baby', 'On The Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe', 'That Old Black Magic' (Bing looked very happy while singing that one), 'Over The Rainbow' (by Rosemary), 'That Old Devil Moon', 'Feudin', Fussin' and Fightin', 'South American Way' (by Carol), 'I Can't Give You Anything But Love', a dance routine by Carol and two men to 'I Won't Dance', 'Long Ago and Far Away' (by Rosemary), an amusing effort by Johnny Mercer to sing 'A Foggy Day' in the wrong key (Rosemary laughingly sang a couple of high notes to help him out), 'Swanee' and finishing with 'I Want To Be Happy' again. Johnny Mercer looked surprisingly uncomfortable during the medley, as if he was having trouble reading the cue cards to know what the next song was - did he need glasses?

Next, Bing introduced the Crosby brothers, who sang an excellent jazzy version of 'Limehouse Blues', with Dennis taking the lead against fine harmony from his other two brothers. Bing then joined them, with all four dressed the same in dark blazers and light slacks, to begin what he called "an old song from the heart". As Bing started to sing 'Please', he was interrupted by the boys, who kidded him that he needed a "new beat" for his song. Following a 'doo-wop' introduction from the boys, Bing was then cajoled into singing "Puh-hu-lease" instead, with a "wamp, da, da" backing while young girls screamed in the audience like the Sinatra bobby-soxers from the 1940s. Bing and the boys obviously enjoyed this little romp together.

The show then changed pace for a 'radio ballet' by Carol Lawrence and a group of male dancers based on themes from old radio programs such as 'Little Orphan Annie', 'Gang Busters', 'Waltz Time with Wayne King', 'Men From Mars' and finishing with 'Here Comes the Show Boat'. Bing and Johnny Mercer then appeared together for a radio medley of their own, taking off their coats and loosening their ties (and Johnny put on glasses!), while standing before a mock-up of a radio studio with an old-fashioned floor mike and music stands. Reading from sheet music, they sang 'Mr. Crosby and Mr. Mercer', 'Mr. Meadowlark' (Bing laughingly flubbed the line about "birdseed", twice!), 'On Behalf of the Visiting Firemen' ("why did we always cup our ears?", they asked each other during this one), and closed with updated lyrics to 'Mr. Crosby and Mr. Mercer'. A very happy sequence by two old friends and old pros.

Rosemary Clooney next sang a slow, moody version of 'There Will Never Be Another You', dressed in a long, black evening gown and a most unusual (for her) tightly-pulled back hairdo, while walking through a set of columns and blowing curtains. Her style of presentation was very reminiscent of her solo of 'Love, You Didn't Do Right by Me' from the film 'White Christmas'.

The finale of the show utilised some interesting trick camera work that enabled Bing to sing a medley of duets (and even a trio) with himself. Unfortunately, the 'live' Bing seated in the centre was whitened out by the glare of the stage lights, which detracted from the overall effect of the 'filmed' Bings that appeared from time to time on either side of him. The 'filmed' Bings included one in a hat and sports coat who helped sing 'June In January' and 'Learn To Croon', one in a western outfit and hat for 'I'm An Old Cowhand' and 'Tumbling Tumbleweeds', one in a Hawaiian shirt with ukulele for 'Sweet Leilani' and 'Blue Hawaii', and finally a trio for 'Play a Simple Melody', with the 'live' Bing singing the counter melody to his two alter egos. At the end, the 'live' Bing stood up and walked off stage as the credits rolled. A very clever sequence that was spoiled by the lighting problems, at least as far as this video taped version was concerned. Whether the original telecast of 30 years ago was more effective, I could not say.

According to TV GUIDE, a medley of some 10 songs by Bing and Rosemary Clooney was apparently lost from this tape through the editing process of Nostalgia Television.

Program Five

The Bing Crosby Show 'Bing In London' (December 11, 1961)
with Terry-Thomas, Dave King, Shirley Bassey, Marion Ryan, the Happy Wanderers and Peter Knight's orchestra. (Special guest spot by Bob Hope)

As a total change of pace, this program was filmed at Wembley Studios in London before a live audience while Bing and Bob Hope were in England making 'The Road To Hong Kong'. (Stan White described the recording of the show in BING 103) The show opened with Bing walking out of a spotlight onto a darkened stage and singing 'Great Day', which was not a very good version because it was pitched too low at the beginning and ended well out of Bing's range at the top end (a retake might well have been in order).

With the lights up and a simplified London skyline in the background, Bing then introduced various pre-filmed street scenes of himself in a light top coat, hat and pipe making the rounds of London during the daytime and evening while supposedly looking for British branches of his Crosby family tree.

In a live sequence, Bing eventually entered a tea-room, where he and comedian Dave King went through the old routine of King claiming to know Bing, and to be his host while Bing was in London, but failing to recognise him when Bing sits at his table and even sings a brief chorus of 'Learn To Croon'. Eventually they are joined by Marion Ryan, who does recognise Bing, and then talks the three of them into doing a song and dance medley of tea and coffee tunes, including 'Tea for Two', 'When I Take My Sugar to Tea', 'A Cup of Coffee, a Sandwich and You', 'So Long, Oo-Long (How Long You Gonna Be Gone)' and finishing with a soft shoe reprise to 'Tea For Two'.

In the next live scene, Bing goes to Somerset House to research the Crosby (or Crosbie) line, where he runs into Terry-Thomas and, after another sketch that lasted too long, eventually is sent off by Terry-Thomas to find the 'Crosby Head' and his distant relative, 'Aunt Matilda', who reportedly is to be found there. On the way, Bing encounters buskers at Leicester Square, where he is arrested by a police constable for singing the 'Sheikh of Araby' with them without a street licence. When the constable recognises Bing, he falls on his knees and begs him to sing 'Melanchrolic Baby', but then hauls him off to court after Bing jokingly performs a few bars.

In the following courtroom scene, the judge also is impressed with meeting "Der Bingle", but is distressed to learn that Bing has been reduced to singing in the streets for a living. After Bing sings 'My Fate Is In Your Hands' to the jury (for a licence violation?), the judge dismisses the case. In a new scene (after a possible commercial break), Bing introduces Shirley Bassey, who sings an obviously pre-filmed medley (with extremely poor lip-synching on her part) of 'Lucky Day', 'I'm Shooting High' and 'As I Love You More and More'. This segment was not at all in keeping with theme of the remainder of the program, which makes you wonder why it was included at all.

Bing is next seen walking the London streets again and entering a pub named the 'Crosby Head'. Switching to a live set inside the pub, Bing is told that his 'Aunt Matilda' would soon appear. In the meanwhile, a great deal of singing and dancing takes place among the pub's patrons, including 'Where Did You Get That Hat', 'Any Old Iron' and 'Knees Up Mother Brown'. Bing joins in the fun with 'Lily of Laguna' while Terry-Thomas turns up as a piano player, and then Bing follows Sean Glenville in a spirited take of 'If You're Irish' before Bob Hope finally appears dressed in drag as Bing's 'Aunt Matilda'. After several typical one-line Crosby-Hope gags (Hope complains that after he "put on all this make-up - Bing gets all the laughs"), the scene closes with more dancing and singing to 'Knees Up, Mother Brown'.

For the final number, Bing is back on center stage, with the London skyline in the background, to say that "there's time for one more song, and I know this one rather well". He then sings just one chorus of 'White Christmas', after which the credits appear against a filmed aerial view of London. A separate sketch and song by Bing and comediene Miriam Karlin 'Fings Ain't Wot They Used to Be' was lost in the Nostalgia Television editing process from this program.

Program Six

The Bing Crosby Show 'The Good Life In the USA' (May 14, 1962)
with Bob Hope, Edie Adams, Gary Crosby, the Smothers Brothers and David Rose's orchestra.

The theme of this show was "leisure time", with most scenes taking place at a fictional "Camp Kare-Free" that was simulated by simple scenery on a large, open stage arranged to suggest a rustic, outdoor setting.

The program opened with Bing in sports jacket and slacks walking across the stage to introduce his main guests, Bob Hope and Edie Adams. Next, Bing stated that "when work ends at five o'clock on Friday, leisure begins", while the stage curtains opened for a dance-parody of the factory scene from Chaplin's "Modern Times" performed by a group of "boys and girls" dressed in work overalls. At a signal for "quitting time", the dancers took off their overalls to reveal bathing suits and sports outfits, while Bing began an extended, quasi-parody version of "America" from "West Side Story", in which he was joined from time-to-time by Bob Hope, Edie Adams and "Number One Son" Gary Crosby. The four eventually finished singing "America" by walking forward together

and falling full length on the stage, as did the dancers in the background.

The next scene featured Bing and Bob seated before a large photo of an ocean liner and surrounded by a group of suitcases and trunks to suggest "travel" as another version of leisure. A movie screen behind them was used to project various stills from the Road films, while they joked and sang their way through a medley of songs from their various movie journeys together. Slipping in an obvious "plug" for their recently-released" "Road to Hong Kong", Bing and Bob worked their way through portions of "You Lucky People You", "Moonlight Becomes You", "Road to Morocco", "Personality", "But Beautiful" and finished by walking off stage while singing "Team Work". Bing seemed more relaxed and ease during this part of the show than Bob, who appeared to be staring at the cue cards most of the time. Their medley featured an obvious flub by Bob Hope of one of his "spontaneous" one-liners, as well as an amusing mistake by Bing on the last line of "Moonlight Becomes You" — to which he ad-libbed "I sang the wrong lyric!" — thus adding to his many famous recording studio blow-ups. This was an enjoyable, obviously-live performance by the two old travelling companions.

In a complete change-of -pace (which did not fit the leisure theme very well), Edie Adams next performed a lengthy song and dance number which began with her as an unhappy, stay-at-home gal with nowhere to go on a Saturday night singing "I Need Some Night Life" dressed informally in a blouse and slacks. Bing then appeared as her "fairy godfather", dressed formally in white from top hat to shoes, and lead her out for a night on the town. Edie miraculously changed into a stunning white evening dress and stole (through some adroit camera work) as she sang "Loads of Love" in a night club setting, only to end up back in her apartment — alone as before.

Bing then appeared in a dark suit on a darkened stage, to introduce clarinettist Pete Fountain and his five-piece jazz group, which played a quiet, but up-tempo version of "I Got Rhythm", in a pleasant variation on the traditional New Orleans style utilising a xylophone to harmonise with his clarinet lead, rather than a trumpet or trombone. The remainder of the show took place as a non-stop sequence in an outdoor setting at "Camp Kare-Free", with the dancers dressed in sports clothes and the four principals in camp uniforms, topped by ridiculous-looking "beanie" caps. Bing , Bob, Edie and Gary introduced themselves to the "campers" as their "counselors" in a live patter-song, complete with several mis-timed lines, which finished with a final high note from Edie that might easily have brought the scenery down!

This was followed by a calisthenic-style dance number, "Chicken Fat", sung by Gary Crosby and the "boys" to extol the virtues of exercise, which segued over to the "girls" listening to the two Smothers Brothers perform one of their typical, droll pseudo-folk songs entitled "(I Fell in a Vat of) Chocolate". Then Bing appeared holding a flexible wooden stick, which he used to beat the time and lead all of the principals, other guests and "boys and girls" in an extended version of "Zing a Little Zong". Bing and Gary sang together several excellent harmonised passages during this song before Bing, Bob, Edie and Gary finished the show by walking forward (with Edie hitting another over-the-top note) to close with "...and that's all!", using the familiar tag line from "High Society".

Bing did not have a solo during this program as it was shown, since Nostalgia Television edited out "Let's Not Be Sensible", which he sang with the Pete Fountain jazz group, as well as a follow-on duet with Gary on 'Simple Melody", also performed with Pete Fountain.

Program Seven

Bing Crosby 'Christmas Color Spectacular' (December 24, 1962)
with Mary Martin and Andre Previn

Billed as ABC-TV's first 'color spectacular' and broadcast on Christmas Eve, this program featured very simple staging that involved only a few backdrops, but an interesting variety of costumes for Mary Martin, who looked absolutely stunning in a different dress for each number, while Bing only changed from a tuxedo to a sports coat and back during the show.

The show opened with Bing in tux and Mary in a black evening dress walking toward Andre Previn (also in tux) at a piano while they sang a medley that began with 'This Is A Lovely Way To Spend An Evening' and worked its way against a bouncy beat from the piano and orchestra through 'I Hear Music', 'The Song Is You', 'Cheek To Cheek' (with a little ballroom dancing by Bing and Mary thrown in), 'I Got Rhythm' and finished with 'This Is A Grand Occasion', while the curtains opened to reveal a large group of dancers and singers in a montage of Mardi Gras scenes.

Mary Martin then appeared alone (in a blue cocktail dress) to perform a real tour-de-force of musical virtuosity describing how musical shows had become an "occupational hazard" for her - to the extent that she heard songs from street signs, do-not-remove labels on pillows, post office mailing hours, traffic tickets and French restaurant phrases - ending with a tongue-twisting recital of names and addresses from the telephone book. Dressed in a grey hat and blue sports jacket, Bing joined Mary for a few moments, following which he slouched down into a modernistic yellow plastic chair to show her the "cool California way of doing things". Bing eased into a quiet, finger-snapping version of a clever, catchy song 'Doing the Bing', which involved various arm and body movements while he remained seated in his chair. After one chorus, the transparent backdrop curtains parted to reveal 20 other singers and dancers, dressed just like Bing, in a large triangle of chairs behind him, for a second run through during which Bing more than held his own with all of his younger colleagues. This was a very effective number for Bing, which he clearly enjoyed doing.

The next scene found Bing back in his tux, and Mary in a striking orange dress, seated at a small coffee table, where

they launched into a sprightly medley that included 'What's New?', 'Singing In the Rain', 'I Love To Whistle', 'I'm In Love With a Wonderful Guy', 'I Like The Likes Of You' and 'Only Forever', during which Mary actually out-whistled and out-yodeled Bing at times. Moving to a piano interlude of 'The Song Is You' by Andre Previn, Bing and Mary finished standing with a rousing version of 'Wait Till The Sun Shines, Nellie' and this time Bing completely "lost his pucker" and Mary had to cover for him for the whistling part!

For a complete change of pace, Andre Previn then played the first holiday music of the show, a quiet rendition of 'God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen' on the harpsichord, with a group of string musicians standing behind him. Then Bing walked to the harpsichord to sing 'Little Drummer Boy' with a small chorus, and Mary came out (in a white dress) to sing a moving version of 'Some Children See Him' with a United Nations children's choir in native costumes. After this, the children sang 'Let There Be Peace On Earth'. Bing then stepped forward to sing the first half chorus of 'White Christmas' and Mary joined him for the second part. Andre Previn came out for a reprise by the three of them of the last line of 'White Christmas' before the credits appeared while the orchestra played 'A Lovely Way To Spend An Evening'.

Mary looked radiant throughout the show, and quite obviously was extremely happy to be appearing with Bing. But Bing looked haggard and almost unwell, from time-to-time. He seldom lost a rather concerned look on his face, even during the medleys. He sang well, but it was not visually a typically-relaxed Crosby performance. Bing was ill during December 1962 and in January 1963 he had surgery on his right kidney. He was no doubt in considerable pain whilst he was recording the show with Mary Martin and it showed.

According to TV Guide, Nostalgia Television edited out Bing's solo of 'I Left My Heart In San Francisco' from this video.

And so, with regret, the Nostalgia Television rebroadcasts of Bing's programs came to an end after his 1962 Christmas color special. But to have had Bing back on the tube each week from August 1995 through March 1996 was both a real surprise, and a distinct pleasure, for viewers throughout the United States who were able to receive the cable service from Nostalgia. We can only hope that other broadcasters might decide to follow in Nostalgia's footsteps, in the future. But, one more time — "thanks, Bing" — for demonstrating how it really should be done, again after more than thirty years!

Wig Wiggins

Festival Films Movie Posters

As Wig mentioned, Festival Films are offering some most attractive movie posters and we reproduce their advertising on the next page. These really are impressive and make a most attractive display. US readers can of course apply direct quite easily but to help other members, Michael Crampton would be happy to take orders in sterling and then send one payment in dollars to Festival Films. If you would like to order posters, please send a cheque for £11 per poster to Michael. Hopefully this payment will cover the full cost but if the exchange rate goes against us (or if the shipping costs are higher than anticipated) we may have to ask for a small final payment when the posters are despatched to you.

BOOKS 'N' BING

Two books have been received recently to which I must draw to your attention. One is exclusively Bing whilst the other has many mentions of Mr. Crosby.

Bing Crosby In The 30's is the book by Gary Hamann which I mentioned in the last BING and which we advertised by a separate flyer. Gary has specialised in putting together books about various major stars in the thirties taking extracts from newspaper coverage in the Los Angeles area. He has spent a year in the basement of the Los Angeles Public Library reading thousands of pages covering the showbiz scene and as he says, it has been a transforming experience for him. The book on Bing covers the period when Bing climbed to the top of the entertainment world, his marriage, the birth of his four sons and the general joie de vivre of his life in that decade. A marvellous picture is created by the verbatim newspaper extracts as we go from appearances with Whiteman, through his early films and radio shows to the halcyon days in the Kraft Music Hall and films such as 'Waikiki Wedding' and 'Sing You Sinners'. Reviews of all Bing's films of the period from several newspapers are included together with news of his radio show and Bing's personal appearances at parties, race tracks and golf courses. A fascinating look at what was probably the most exciting period in Bing's career. The book runs to 200 pages (A5 size) and to order it, please contact either Michael Crampton or Wig Wiggins. Allow 3-5 weeks for US delivery. Gary's other books include Clark Gable (291 pages), Gary Cooper (260 pages), James Cagney (276 pages), Joan Crawford (256 pages) and Jean Harlow (277 pages).

Glenn Miller In Britain then and now by Chris Way is the second book and this is a lovingly produced prestige chronicle of Glenn Miller's time in the UK in 1944. High quality glossy photographs adorn the book and the depth of the research is frankly incredible. To anyone who lived through the last war, this book will be riveting and if you are a Glenn Miller fan you must have this wonderfully detailed record of the last months of Glenn's life. The author has been to every location where the Band performed and we have photographs and maps to complete the picture. Bing is mentioned frequently and there are 4 nice photographs of him as well including one with Glenn Miller and Paul Dudley taken at Bedford which I had never seen before and which we now reproduce. There is even a page about Kettner's Restaurant where Bing had to sing to the crowd to get them to disperse. A superb coffee table book, the cost is £19.95 and it is

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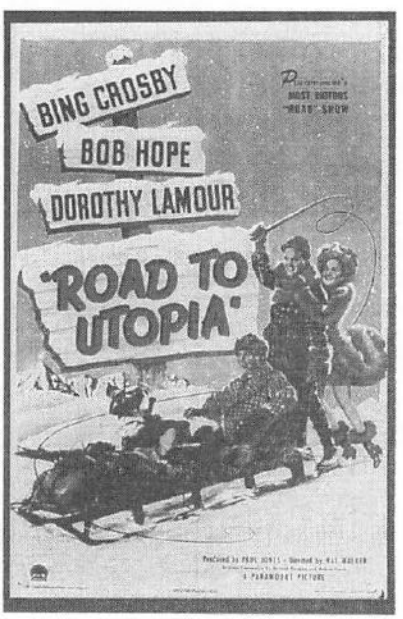

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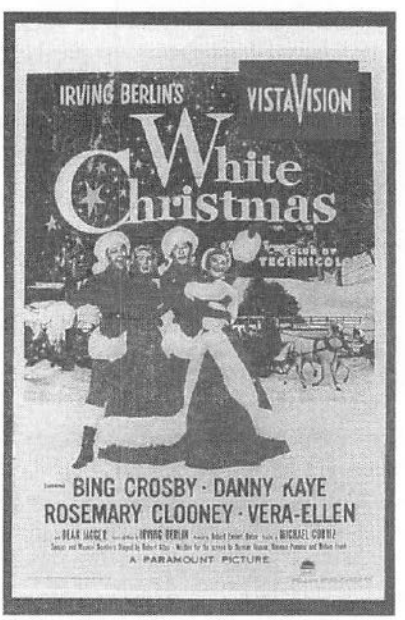

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In addition Jim Reilly sends details of two more new books:-

Francis Albert Sinatra Tracked Down compiled by C A Phasey
Although this book does not profess to be the definitive list of the recorded songs and British albums of Frank Sinatra it is never-the-less a very comprehensive listing and I am sure that it will prove very useful to Mr Sinatra's devotees. The book has two sections; one with the songs listed alphabetically (over 1000 titles are shown), together with composers, arrangers and/or conductors, record companies, release dates, record titles and numbers etc. and the other listing the album titles and their content. The albums are listed in date order under the record company name and if I had to make one criticism of this book it would be to say that I would have preferred to see the album titles listed in alphabetical order under their various headings. It is rather churlish of me to make this point as I know how much work and dedication goes into producing a book of this nature. I am certain that this will prove an excellent reference to all those who are interested in the recording career of Francis Albert Sinatra. (We get some connection - Bing is shown accompanying Frank on the following: Don't Be A Do Badder; Fugue For Tin Horns; Go Tell It On The Mountain; Let Us Break Bread Together; Mister Booze; Mr Sinatra & Mr Crosby [various - medley]; Style; The Oldest Established Floating Crap Game; Well Did You Evah and You Never Had It So Good).
Highly Recommended.

Tony Bennett Tracked Down compiled by Mark Fox and Chris Phasey
Obviously this is a book similar in nature to that reviewed above although its aims are more comprehensive. Compiled by the founder of the Tony Bennett Appreciation Society together with Chris Phasey it was published in order to celebrate Tony's 70th birthday in 1996. It has a potted history of Tony Bennett and is sub-divided into seven sections: 1. The Songs of Tony Bennett (over 600 titles are shown), 2. The albums of Tony Bennett; 3. The EP's; 4. The Singles; 5. World-wide CD releases; 6. US Album Discography and 7. Unreleased Concerts. Again my only criticism is that other than in the song section, the album titles etc. are not listed in alphabetical order. This book looks as if it has been well researched and will be very useful to the fans of and anyone else interested in the recordings of Tony Bennett. Bing is quoted in the book as saying "Tony Bennett is the best singer I've ever heard".
Highly recommended.

Both books are in paperback and can be obtained by writing to the publishers at the following address: Buckland Publications Ltd, Barwick Road, Dover, Kent CT17 0LG:
Price: £9.95 each including p+p. Overseas members will be charged an extra £1.55 for postage.

THE CROSBY COLLECTION 1926-1977 Part Four 1951 to 1960

Fred Reynolds latest volume is reviewed by an admiring John Bignell

On page 7 of BING 112, Colin Pugh paid handsome tribute to the continued excellence of the literary accomplishments of Fred Reynolds and Colin himself put not a word out of place in his own review. Having now read Part Four of Fred's epic saga, I have had more time to appreciate what a unique contribution he has made to the Crosby career. This book is somewhat heavier than any of the previous three volumes for the simple reason that there were more recordings to list and analyse. Over 500 commercial recordings, in fact, and not one receives less than its due acknowledgement. Of course, with such a vast, unrivalled output, there had to be high spots and low points. If I noted these correctly, it may be worthwhile commenting on them.

On 5th September 1952, Bing and the Andrews Sisters made their last two recordings together accompanied by Matty Matlock and his Orchestra. 'South Rampart Street Parade' has long been my favourite among all their collaborations. Does anyone know if any other vocalists recorded this song? Fred shows once again that he also places the girls very high in his own estimation. 'Cool Water' was the very last song they recorded and brought to an end a memorable thirteen year partnership. As Fred says: "A fond farewell, then, to Patti, LaVerne and Maxene and a felicitous collocation of talent".

The Musical Autobiography set of 1954 also, quite rightly, receives a very favourable review. There will be others who, like me, support Fred's contention that the (much later) addition of the Pete Moore orchestral tracks to many of these little gems with the Buddy Cole Trio did nothing to enhance the originals. On pages 113/114 in his book, Fred discusses these 1978/79 embellishments in his usual thoughtful and masterly way.

My long time favourite Christmas Album has been 'A Christmas Sing Around the World' which was carried by

more than two hundred CBS Radio Network stations, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Armed Forces Radio Service and the Voice of America on 24th December, 1955. It was a mammoth project and must rank as one of the greatest technical feats of all time. A real high spot for Bing fans was the recording of the 'Bing With A Beat' album with Bob Scobey on 19/20 February, 1957. There is no doubting Fred's enthusiasm for this superb album and his detailed analysis of each track makes fascinating reading.

Bing recorded 'Gigi' on 27 December 1957 and I was delighted that this receives a quite fulsome review and nod of approval. There is no doubt that Bing was very comfortable with this song at a time when his voice was outstanding. Between 20th and 24th July, 1959, Bing and Rosemary Clooney worked on the 'How The West Was Won' album and Fred details a lot of painstaking research which went into the production of this unique album. It must remain a 'tour de force' in Bing's recording career.

The final high spot in this era came with the Bing and Satchmo partnership when they got together on 28th and 29th June 1960 to put together the album for Project Records and issued by MGM under the title (appropriately) 'Bing and Satchmo'. Fred finds no difficulty in waxing lyrical about this eleven track album and to read his comments is sheer delight. How fortunate that the twelfth title, inexplicably left off the album, was on a later Capitol release. I refer to 'Lazy River' of course.

But the whole point of 'The Crosby Collection' is to appraise Bing's career with total honesty and Fred Reynolds certainly does not shirk the task of analysing the recordings which did not attain the highest standards of which Bing was capable on all the foregoing examples. I will do no more than list the albums that come within the category 'Could do better' or perhaps 'Should not have done it' and you will have to read Fred's book to discover why I say he advances a strong case in defence of his criticism of the following efforts which do not do Bing justice:

June 1956
Bing Sings While Bregman Swings
December 1959
Join Bing and Sing Along
June 1960
El Senor Bing
December 1960
101 Gang Songs

It would not surprise me if many of you reading this list are nodding in agreement. It certainly contains nothing that I have played for years by choice.

Finally, on pages 348/349 of this genuine labour of love, Fred puts, in a dozen or so lines, a perfect description of the kind of musical values and exploitation Bing and other quality singers had to contend with from the late 1950s onwards. So aptly does Fred make his irrefutable points that I will not attempt to paraphrase them. Suffice it to say that Fred mentions that Bing, in a magazine interview, was later to say: "I think popular music.... is one of the few things in the twentieth century that has made giant strides in reverse". Even Fred could not have put it more simply and clearly.

Volume Five, and the completion of this historic series, will make riveting reading. Despite the 'opposition' if we can call it that, we know that there were the best part of two decades of the Crosby magic still to come.

John Bignell

Starline Celebrity Tours

Our member Clive Roberts has arranged for a tremendous number of film buffs to visit Hollywood over the years and to celebrate his firm's 20th. anniversary a special tour is being arranged for 1997 as set out on the following advert. The brochure makes very good reading indeed and if you are interested do contact Clive. Already there are more than 40 bookings for the tour even though it is over a year away. Clive would love to have sufficient numbers to be able to arrange a special Bing Crosby tour sometime as he has done for the Doris Day and Frank Sinatra clubs. See opposite page.

Ears To The Voice

Ken Merry offers his perceptions of Bing's voice during the years. Although he has not said so, this may well be a response to Clive Menadue's article in the last BING.

Although Bing's voice provides a common chord that unites legions of real enthusiasts, the perceptions of his voice are strongly individual and often the subject of debate and sometimes contention. Some enthusiasts become encapsulated in one time scale of Bing's long and vast recording output. This is quite reasonable but an immovable notion can, like a religious or an ideological dogma, draw a curtain across wide experience and in the process distort observation and restrict enjoyment.

Singular notions can also distort perceptions of some songs. An instance of this is with 'Sweet Leilani', a song strongly associated with Bing. This won the Academy Award of its year but subsequent general assessments suggest the other nominations were better standard ballads and have lasted with a higher value. This is quite valid but a particular time of an era has its own influences and characteristics which later times cannot experience or understand. Bing was attracted to many ballad genres and the Hawaiian one was one of them. He may have become attracted when his voice was under strain early in his solo career and a doctor suggested a vacation. Bing had a holiday in Hawaii. As the 1930s unfolded, Bing became more of an international star and at the time 'Sweet Leilani' was nominated, Bing was extremely popular and this plus general enthusiasm might have influenced the choice of the Academy Award. All this reflects the feelings and perceptions of the particular time and any subsequent reassessments cannot change such

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temporal truths.
Another Academy Award song, not generally associated with Bing, which has been subjected to reassessment is 'The Last Time I Saw Paris'. Whatever later perceptions of this song, it struck a poignant chord in millions at the time just after the Nazi jackboots marched into Paris. Some songs have double evaluations. Take 'A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square', sung very well by Bing, which is a fine melody with irresistible lyricism and surely one of the best ballads of the era in its own right. Yet for many, it is a potent part of wartime.

On personal levels, songs can have strong associations. As a teenager on the day that the second war was declared; young men who I knew well and were a few years older than myself made it an occasion on the night and celebrated together at a nearby British Legion club. At the end of the celebration, they came out into the first black-out and sang at the top of their voices walking their way home. The song was not 'Land of Hope and Glory' but a song which was the current rage - 'South of the Border'. A little later all these young men were called up into the Armed Forces. Sometimes when I hear this song again, I remember how many of these lads never came back to sing at the top of their voices.

With regard to the perceptions of Bing's voice, it is good to listen to particular songs of a particular time but at the same time it is wise and very satisfying to perceive all the output of Bing's vast recording career. Listen to Bing's records of the late 1920s when he was with the Rhythm Boys and Paul Whiteman. Bing's voice is light and relatively bland. Then listen to his records when he went solo in the early 1930s and the change is surprising. The timbre is stronger and the range is wider and those higher notes of the light baritone are sometimes suggestive of operetta singers. As the 1930s progressed and Bing's voice and career went from strength to strength, his voice seemed to graduate to the lower tones, a trend he was to joke about in his later years in a cameo role in the film 'Let's Make Love'. He was advising Yves Montand on singing and Bing suggested to him that he should get down to the lower notes ...."that's where the money is."

On the records of 1936 to, say 1941, give or take a year, Bing's voice seemed to reach its peak of expression. The timbre was of full power. The range was at its widest. This was a fine voice. To support this notion, listen to Bing of this time singing Victor Herbert's 'Thine Alone' or 'Sweethearts'. In most of the 1940s, Bing's voice became what many regarded as the standard Crosby voice. His career and popularity were at their height. Wartime appearances, films, records, radio shows. This was the decade as Alan Dell once said when Bing was crowned the popular king.

The 1950s brought for Bing the effects of maturity and change. His film career and his radio work declined. He developed a second but lesser career in television. This was the time of his radio work with Buddy Cole and Rosie Clooney and his going into the studio to make his Musical Autobiography. No matter what different perceptions of this may be, we should be grateful to the Decca people for persuading Bing to embark on this enterprise. Also this was the decade that saw Frank Sinatra become a dominant influence in popular music. Bing's voice was not the same as in the 30s and 40s but he seemed to get a second wind. There was not a dramatic change in the voice which still retained the Crosby charisma.

Bing shows Yves Montand "where the money is."

The 1960s saw Bing in his career - appearances and recordings - in a kind of comfortable phase. He was a little subdued. He was a little older and his voice was a little subdued too but still with that pleasant unique sound. The Longines set 'The Songs I Love' grows on you. David Jacobs on the latter Sounds Easy programmes played quite a few of them. Then as the 1970s approached and began, there was that surprising surge of Bing recording in the studio. All those last recordings, many of them in Britain: the Concert Tour; we should be grateful for this late activity. The recording of Bing's voice in this last phase is worth exploring, although some enthusiasts are less interested after the 1940s. There are some gems; try Bing with that fine arrangement of 'The Rose In Her Hair'. Also we must be grateful for that final broadcast in Bing's last few days.

Preferences of a particular phase in the evolution of Bing's voice are valid but at the same time the whole of Bing's output and subtle changes of the voice over a full career should be a permanent aim. In this manner, the voice can be evaluated in its true value. In all this there is much pleasure and the knowledge that the voice was and in all the recorded manifestations still unique.

Ken Merry

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

G. D. Hamann Co. 2365 Scarff Street, Los Angeles, California 90007, USA

Gary's book 'Bing Crosby In The 30's' is now available and is reviewed elsewhere in this edition. Gary has produced 42 titles on different stars over the last two years by putting together verbatim day-by-day accounts of their lives in the 1930s as portrayed by the Los Angeles newspapers including movie reviews, gossip, scandal, interviews, publicity fluff and visits to film sets. The series includes books about Fred Astaire, Errol Flynn, James Cagney, Gary Cooper, Clark Gable, Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy and many others. The prices of the books vary depending on the amount of information about a particular star. Typically the price is $29.95 and write to Gary for full details of what is available.

Peter Murray, 5 Hyvot View, Edinburgh EH17 8PQ

Peter offers two 90 minute audio cassettes called 'Bing Sings Frank' in which our man sings songs associated with Frank Sinatra. Some rarer radio and TV tracks included. Ideally Peter would like to trade the material and he is looking for the following LPs: - 'The Boy Friends' (Harmony HL-7147), 'Bouncing With Bing' (CP/1), 'Harlem Speaks' (Family SFR-DP 715) Return To Paradise Islands' (Reprise R 6106). SAE to Peter for details of the cassettes.

Etty Gits, Hobokenstraat 559, 4826 EJ Breda, Netherlands

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Trevor Ridgway, 15 Millfields Way, Wombourne, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV5 8HP (tel. 01902 892592)

Trevor is the nephew of member Cyril Parker, who sadly died in May. Trevor has to deal with disposal of Cyril's Crosby collection which includes 100+ LPs, videos, cassettes, 78s, books, Palladium programmes and so on. Please contact Trevor direct for further details. Ideally Trevor would like to sell the whole collection to one person who would collect but he will play it by ear.

John Unwin, 47 West Way, Broadstone, Dorset BH18 9LJ

Wanted

Bing's 'Going Hollywood' Australian series of 17 LPs. State price for excellent to mint condition.

Margaret Otway, 14 Barnsley Avenue, Conisborough, Doncaster DN 12 3LB

Margaret seeks a copy of 'Bing and Other Things' by Kathryn Crosby. She is happy to pay any reasonable price to anyone who has a spare copy.

John Marshall, 39 Kings Rd., Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QD

John has produced a fascinating 50 minute video of an interview with Howard Crosby, Bing's nephew and the son of Ted Crosby. It gives an insight into the real Bing and it is very pleasing to hear such warm comments about Bing from someone who knew him intimately. Cost £5 including postage. (It's almost worth that just to have the personalised introduction bearing your name in lights which John always puts on his videos!)

Bert Day, 35 Galla Crescent, Dalbeattie, Scotland DG5 4JY

As we all know, Bing appeared at the London Palladium in 1976 and many of us have the LP recording of the event. What many members will not know, is that Bing did an extra show at the Palladium on Sunday, July 4 to celebrate the demi-centennial of the USA. The proceedings were captured on tape and Bert offers a cassette of the show for £3 (including postage in the UK). The show differs from the LP as there is a different introduction but obviously a lot of the show is similar to the show that many of us saw at the Palladium.

Stephanie Edwards, Special Collections Librarian, Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington 99258-0001, USA

The University is attempting to build complete collections of all Crosby club magazines and they are seeking copies of BING magazine numbers 25, 27, 28, 30 and 31. If anyone can help, please write direct to Stephanie.

Dave O'Dell, Apartment 69, 52/15, 110th. Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 3KI, Canada

Dave seeks 3 non-Bing videos (any format) as follows:
Beau James
The Eddie Cantor Story
The Story of Will Rogers
- Write to Dave direct.

Ken Merry, 28 The Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 5JX

TO SUSTAIN THE MEMORY OF ALAN DELL - AND BING

Audio cassettes of Alan's tributes to Bing and others. A year's unbroken sequence of Alan's Crosby Corner. Unusual collections of Bing not commercially available. SAE to Ken please.

Alf Ward, 112 Commonside, Sheffield, S. Yorks S10 1GG

FOR SALE

Brand new video cassette of 'Road To Singapore', One only, first come, first served, £8 post paid. By the way, I have just purchased two Bing Crosby Corner cassettes from our old friend Ken Merry and I find them excellent quality and a must for all members old and new. *(Editor: Details can be seen above.)*

Hendrik Tiedemann, Loehdorfer Str. 318, 42699 Solingen, Germany.

WANTED

Books about Bing Crosby, especially those by Bishop/Bassett, George Carpozi Jr., Kathryn Crosby (My Life with Bing), Ted + Larry Crosby (1937 edition), J. T. H. Mize, Colin Pugh (1988 edition), also magazines (particularly BING 97, 100, 105). Also wanted: Books about John McCormack and other singers; books and records and other material on Paul Robeson and Paul Whiteman; records by Roger Whittaker - especially those from the early 1970s. Who has a copy of 'All Kinds of Everything' by Dana or other records by that artist? I'm also searching for several Dean Martin records (his last single 'L.A. is my Home' and a lot of his LPs) and Al Martino recordings, especially the early ones (i.e. 1952-1962).

Marc Matelart, 48 Avenue De L'Orange, 1410 Waterl0o, Belgium.

Marc is anxiously seeking BING magazine #103. Can anyone help?

P. Cottenden, 72 Francis Way, Liverpool L16 5KW

FOR SALE - 10 Bing LPs and albums of other artists such as Doris Day, Frankie Laine, Johnny Mathis and Billy Daniels.

Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP (tel. 01564 730108)

BINGANG, the official magazine of the American Club Crosby, is published twice yearly and is available from Ken Crossland. Annual subscription £11. For free sample copy, write to Ken enclosing a 36p stamp.

Back Copies of BING

Issues from nos. 93 to 111 (except 97, 100, 103 and 105) are available for £2 each plus postage. Order from Michael Crampton, address on inside cover of magazine.

Sinatra Music Society, 183 Summerfields Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9NU

As many of you will know, this Society produces a most impressive magazine on a bi-monthly basis. The magazine includes features on all artistes performing quality popular music. The annual sub for UK members is £10 and write to Des Davis at the above address for details.

The Dean Martin Association, 259 London Rd., Croydon, Surrey CR0 2RL

For details, write to Bernard Thorpe at the address shown above. The subscription is 10 and the Association's newsletter "Just Dino" is published a minimum of 4 times a year, sometimes more.

The Sammy Davis Jr. Association c/o Paul Iacovou, 6 Thyra Grove, North Finchley, London N12 8HB

The Judy Garland Club c/o Anthony R. Scarrott, Flat 3, 25 Holland Rd., Hove, East Sussex BN3 1JF

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX

Details of this society can be obtained from Martin Daye at the above address. Annual subscription £8. A quarterly magazine called 'Simply Doris' is published and the Society organises an annual convention in Leeds. Doris Day herself remains in touch with the Society.

International Friends of Gordon Macrae, c/o Mrs. Pat Robinson, 47 Lea Mill Park Drive, Yeaden, Leeds LS19 7YH

Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 13 Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN

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Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby Clubs. Please write to the addresses shown for further details.

Club Crosby, BINGANG
Mark Scrimger, President,
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
435 So. Holmes Ave., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA
(Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP)

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA

The Queensland Bing Crosby Society,
John Wright, 17 Thurecht Parade, Scarborough, Queensland 4020, Australia

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130.

Keith Parkinson's CELLULOID CROSBY

Member John Martin wrote to us some months ago enclosing photocopies from what looked like quite an interesting book. We referred it to Keith Parkinson with the following result.

It was an editorial request which resulted in me lifting 'Anatomy of the Movies' from the bookshelf for review purposes. Had Sherlock Holmes been watching me as I blew a light coating of dust from the top of the pages, he would have observed that it was not a newly acquired book and that it wasn't consulted too often as a work of reference. Right on both counts. The book was published in 1981 and it provided an overview of Hollywood movies, mainly during the then half century of sound films. The book's contributors were film specialists of one sort or another and David Pirie edited it for Windward Publications. A quality hardback, it cost £7.95, which is an inflationary story in itself.

It is impossible to survey the period covered by the book without reference to Bing, and his achievements are scattered throughout the book. They are placed in the context of the financial success story of Hollywood and allow us to appreciate where Crosby stands in the business of film history. For instance, the fortunes of the major studios are studied in detail on a year by year basis. Their ups and downs are chronicled, and it is necessary to turn to a chart devoted to Paramount Pictures to register the Crosby impact. Eight films involving Bing boosted that studio's balance sheet in a significant way between 1940 and 1955. For the record, they are 'Road To Singapore', 'Going My Way', 'Blue Skies', 'Welcome Stranger', 'Road To Rio', 'Emperor Waltz', 'White Christmas', and 'The Country Girl'. It was a case of Paramount by name and Paramount by achievement when production was measured alongside that of the other Hollywood studios. For instance, in 1946 Paramount provided half of the box office hits of that year with 'Blue Skies' being their biggest earner. Although Bing's Paramount contract ran out in the mid-fifties, he immediately re-appears on the MGM chart in 1956 because of that studio's success with 'High Society'. A final showing, again for MGM, comes with the 1974 hit 'That's Entertainment'.

The book's section on most profitable stars compiles its statistics from the files of 'Variety' and 'The Motion Picture Almanac'. It confirms Bing's fifteen year reign as a major film star. He has a continuous presence in the top ten from 1941 to 1955. The statistics gathered for almost half a century are used to establish the most profitable performers between 1932 and 1980. The top three are John Wayne, Gary Cooper and Bing Crosby in that order. Because the book takes an objective overview of all issues influencing the film business, we are told that by the 1970s the under-twenties represented over 40% of cinema audiences. If the picturegoing habits of youth had been as strong in the 1930s, perhaps Bing would have registered more strongly at the box office in that decade.

The section of the book headed 'Product' looks at films rather than actors. Its value in league table terms is that a film's box office performance is measured on a level playing field. The Economist magazine provided information to allow an adjustment for inflation to provide comparison of like with like. The results give a true history of all time great films on a 'bums on seats' basis. As well as an all time great chart, there are listings for specific film genres. Why 'Going My Way' is shown as a comedy and the Road pictures are categorised as musicals is a mystery but the conclusions drawn from the lists are still valid. To indicate the scope of the box-office take, I have shown the number one champion in each section. Rental incomes are shown per million dollars and are adjusted for inflation as at 1980. To bring values into 1996 spending terms an upwards adjustment of 65% would be needed.

ALL TIME HITS	
1. Gone With the Wind	310
39= White Christmas	60
Sergeant York	60
42. Going My Way	58.5
48= The Bells of St.Mary's	56
Spartacus	56

COMEDY HITS	
1. The Sting	95.9
4. Going My Way	58.5
7. The Bells of St. Mary's	56
14. Welcome Stranger	42.7

MUSICALS	
1. The Sound of Music	180
8. White Christmas	60
18. Road To Morocco	40
20. Blue Skies	39.9
23. Holiday Inn	37.5
29. Star Spangled Rhythm	34.2
33= Road to Utopia	31.5
Till The Clouds Roll By	31.5
Road To Rio	31.5
Easter Parade	31.5

DRAMAS	
1. Gone With The Wind	310
31= The Country Girl	30
I'll Cry Tomorrow	30

Even if 'Anatomy of the Movies' is now out of date, it is still relevant in Crosbyana terms. This is because Bing's

contribution to world entertainment is embraced in its entirety within the book's time span.

Keith Parkinson

(Editor: Some fascinating facts and figures. Good to see 'Road to Morocco' shown as a major success although it did not show in the earlier chart used by Keith in BING 105. I thought 'Holiday Inn' and 'High Society' might have been more prominently placed but there you go.)

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

Keith continues with his marathon review of Bing's film career.

Gleason, James (1886 - 1959). Actor, screenwriter and playwright. It is in the first capacity that the Crosby connection occurs. He was in a few frames of one of Paramount's promotional shorts which also featured Bing. That was 'Hollywood On Parade No. 4' (1933). His 'proper' acting took place in 'Riding High' (1950), in which he played the racing secretary. By then his face was well known to all regular moviegoers, even if they couldn't always put a name to his face. He had been a character actor for thirty years with a range of stereotypes embracing reporters, gamblers, fight managers and other big city types. They always had one thing in common: beneath their crusty exteriors lurked a heart of gold. Gleason made over 150 films. Of those I enjoyed, 'Arsenic And Old Lace' (1944), 'The Bishop's Wife' (1947) and 'The Night Of The Hunter' (1955) linger in the memory. He worked until the time of his death, his last film being appropriately enough 'The Last Hurrah' (1958).

Go Fly A Kite Song. In 'The Starmaker' (1939), a chorus of kids help Bing perform this Johnny Burke - James V. Monaco number. It is chosen as the song for the stage debut of what developed into a vaudevillian act featuring Larry Earl (Bing) and assorted child performers.

God Bless America Song. This Irving Berlin composition was recorded by Bing when he was working on the soundtrack sessions for 'Blue Skies' (1946). It was not included in the release print but issues of the soundtrack on disc contain it along with another half dozen songs cut before the film's release. Bing had already made a studio recording of the song for Decca in 1939.

Goddard, Paulette (1911-1990). Because she was contracted to Paramount during her main years of popularity, it was inevitable that she appeared in the same films as Bing from time to time. They never acted together although they both appeared as themselves in 'Hollywood On Parade Z3 No. 7' (1933), 'Star Spangled Rhythm' (1942), 'Duffy's Tavern' (1945) and 'Variety Girl' (1947). She was a striking beauty with a private life of more interest than many of her films. When she was a teenager she quit her job as a Ziegfeld girl to marry a wealthy industrialist. She left New York and drove to Reno in 1931 in order to obtain a quickie divorce. She decided not to turn the car round and carried on to Hollywood where her looks saw her employed as a Goldwyn girl before being signed up by Hal Roach. She met Charlie Chaplin in 1932 and they started to live together immediately. They married, but she divorced him in 1942 and married Burgess Meredith two years later. That marriage lasted six years and she quit films in the mid-fifties before her final marriage to novelist Erich Maria Remarque. Her films were never quite good enough to make her a screen legend but picturegoers have fond memories of her in such entertainments as 'The Cat and The Canary' (1939), 'Reap The Wild Wind' (1942) and 'On Our Merry Way' (1948). She attempted an ill advised comeback in the unfortunately named 'Time of Indifference' (1964). A typical European co-production, Miss Goddard was cast as Claudia Cardinale's mother.

Godfrey, Arthur (1903 - 1983). Popular radio and TV entertainer and talent scout. Godfrey just about qualifies for inclusion in this A-Z because he was heavily featured in that bizarre advertising short for Chesterfield Cigarettes, 'The Fifth Freedom'. Bing, like Godfrey, had a radio programme sponsored by Chesterfield but ironically Godfrey ended his life as an anti-smoking campaigner having recovered from surgery following lung cancer. Under his talent scout label, winning contestants on his television show included Pat Boone, the McGuire Sisters and the Everly Brothers. He also had brief hit parade successes with 'Too Fat Polka', 'Dance Me Loose' and 'Slow Poke' amongst others. He made little impact in the UK.

Going Hollywood. Film. This 1933 movie certainly added to the impetus which made Bing a box-office draw. Long just a grey memory for those who saw it on the big screen, it enjoyed several satellite television showings in the 1990s. It may not have stood the test of time, but it retains a charm of its own, helped by high production values and half a dozen good songs. Released by MGM, it was financed by William Randolph Hearst for his Cosmopolitan Pictures company. It was intended as a lavish showcase for his girlfriend Marion Davies, whose film career waned with the coming of sound. Hearst bought the best talent for 'Going Hollywood'. Walter Wanger produced, Raoul Walsh directed, Donald Ogden Stewart wrote the screenplay, Lennie Hayton was Musical Director and Bing was Miss Davies' leading man. He played a crooner with whom schoolteacher Marion Davies was infatuated. She gets her man. Stories abound regarding the relaxed atmosphere prevailing during the

three months the film was in production. The sense of fun during shooting is captured by Bing in the recording he made as a 'tribute' to the Director: 'Rollicking Rockaway Raoul'. MGM found a pristine print of the film in their vaults and excerpts were featured in 'That's Entertainment' (1974) and 'That's Entertainment 2' (1976).

Going Hollywood. Song. The title song of the film was never recorded for commercial release by Bing. It is a big production number in the film and it's difficult to understand why Brunswick did not programme it in the recording sessions which covered another five of the Arthur Freed - Nacio Herb Brown compositions. Radio and record publicity could only heighten box office awareness. Forty years after it was first seen and heard by cinema-goers, the song delighted millions of viewers a second time when it was included in the compilation film 'That's Entertainment' (1974).

Going My Way. Film. This was Bing's biggest box-office success to date. Made in 1944, it still involves viewers over fifty years later. When Bing died on October 14th. 1977, it was appropriate that the tribute film the BBC scheduled three days later was 'Going My Way'. In the film, Bing plays Father O'Malley, assigned to the rundown St. Dominics in a deprived area of New York. The present incumbent is played by Barry Fitzgerald and it is the verbal sparring of the two Fathers that bring humour and pathos to a story with the obligatory happy ending. In this case a fund to rebuild St. Dominics following a fire and a surprise visit from Ireland re-uniting Barry Fitzgerald with his mother. The film was showered with awards, including:
An Oscar for Bing as Best Actor of 1944.
Three Oscars for Leo McCarey (Best Director, Original story and Film)
Oscars for Frank Butler and Frank Cavett (Best Screenplay)
New York Film Critics Awards for Best Picture, Best Actor (Fitzgerald) and Best Director (McCarey)
Golden Globe Award as Best Motion Picture (Drama)
One of the New York Times' ten best films of 1944.
The top of Variety's list of moneymaking films of 1943/44.
The Picturegoer Award for the year's best performance in a film to Bing.

Going My Way. Song. Written by Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen for the film of the same name. The song plays an important part in the plot. It is written by Father O'Malley with a view to it raising money towards the mortgage on St. Dominics. When an old friend of O'Malley's, opera singer Genevieve Linden (played by Rise Stevens) sings it before the intended publishers, they are unimpressed. As they leave the theatre, O'Malley sits down at the piano and plays 'Swinging on a Star' which the publishers decide to buy instead. Bing recorded 'Going My Way' on my third birthday.

Goldwyn, Sam (1882-1974) Producer. Bing worked for Goldwyn once. This was because Bob Hope was contracted to the producer for a series of films. As a result Bing had a walk-on part in 'The Princess and the Pirate' (1944). in the early fifties, Paramount wanted to buy the rights to the musical 'Guys and Dolls' with a view to Bing and Hope starring in this Frank Loesser musical. Goldwyn bought it and made it a success with Sinatra and Brando in starring roles. Goldwyn is a true Hollywood legend. His misuse of the English language guarantees he figures in every book of show-business quotes. It doesn't matter whether he really said "Include me out", "A verbal agreement isn't worth the paper it's written on" or "Anyone seeing a psychiatrist should have his head examined". The fact is, his quotes or misquotes did more to keep his name in the showbiz columns than any public relations firm could achieve. He was a film pioneer, tasting success in 1916 when he was involved in the very profitable feature 'The Squaw Man'. He co-produced the first version of 'Ben Hur' in 1925. Sound films earned him accolades and profits for the next three decades with successes such as 'Roman Scandals' (1933), 'Dead End' (1937), 'Wuthering Heights' (1939), 'The Best Years of Our Lives' (1946), 'Hans Christian Andersen' (1952) and 'Porgy and Bess' (1959). He is credited with establishing the screen careers of Ronald Colman, Gary Cooper, David Niven, Lucille Ball, Danny Kaye, Will Rogers and Vera-Ellen.

ONCE IN A WHILE

Ella Fitzgerald passed away in June at the age of 78. Born at Newport News, Virginia, she grew up in Yonkers, near New York. Her father died when she was very young and with the death of her mother in 1935, she had to be admitted to an orphanage. She had already started singing in talent contests and this led to her being spotted by Chick Webb, a popular jazz drummer. He could not employ her as she was a minor but he solved the problem by arranging for him and his wife to adopt Ella. Her first recordings were made with Chick Webb in 1935 and she attained national prominence when her record of 'A-Tisket, A-Tasket' reached the top of the charts in 1938. Webb died in 1939 and for three years, Ella took over his band before becoming a solo artist. Duets on 'I'm Making Believe' and 'Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall' with the Mills Brothers produced number one hits in 1944 but it was the long playing record which established her as

a legend. Starting with 'Ella Fitzgerald Sings The Cole Porter Song Book' she recorded a number of albums dedicated to the work of various songwriters such as Rodgers & Hart, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin and Harold Arlen. These are classics which still stand up well today. However, it was as a jazz singer that she was best known and another memorable LP was 'Ella and Louis' which she made with Satchmo in 1956. Bing and Ella never made a commercial recording together but Ella appeared five times on Bing's Chesterfield show and also an identical number of appearances were made on his General Electric show. A marvellous CD called 'Ella Fitzgerald with Bing Crosby - My Happiness' was culled from these shows by Geoff Milne and was issued on the Parrot label in 1992. Ella also turned up on television with Bing. He hosted Ella on the Hollywood Palace show of February 18, 1967 and they both guested on the Carol Burnett Show of November 3, 1969.

Ella suffered from non-insulin-dependent diabetes for many years and complications arising from this led to her having a heart bypass in 1987 and both legs being amputated below the knees in 1993. She married twice but neither marriage lasted. Ella leaves one adopted son.

George Burns died at the age of 100 on March 9th. George was born as Nathan Birnbaum on January 20th., 1896 in New York. After a childhood career as a member of a children's singing quartet, he took up roller skating on stage before turning to comedy where he became a deft purveyor of rapid one-liners. He met up with Gracie Allen in 1922 and they gradually built an act together before marrying in 1926. They became well-known in vaudeville and started making short films and appearing on radio. Their paths crossed with Bing in January 1932 when they all appeared on the bill at the Paramount, New York. They went on to appear with him in 'The Big Broadcast' as well as 'Hollywood On Parade' 'College Humor', 'We're Not Dressing' and 'The Big Broadcast of 1936'. In addition they made 'Love in Bloom' with Dixie Lee Crosby. It had been planned that they would appear in 'Road to Singapore' but in the event they were unavailable when the film came to be made. It was in the 1930s that they became huge radio stars playing husband and wife in a constant sitcom and Bing made a guest appearance on their show on December 4th., 1947. George Burns appeared on Bing's Philco Show which was broadcast on 14th. January 1948 and Gracie joined George on the Philco Show of the following week. In 1950, their show transferred to TV. As far as we know, Bing did not appear on their TV show although he did make a joint appearance with George Burns on the Jack Benny television show which was transmitted on March 21st., 1954. Gracie Allen retired in 1958 thus ending the TV show. Gracie died in 1964 and although George appeared with Bing on the Hollywood Palace Show of January 16th., 1965, it seemed likely that he would fade into obscurity. However in 1975 he was given the opportunity to take a leading part in the film 'The Sunshine Boys' alongside Walter Matthau. It was a Neil Simon story about two elderly comedians who reunite for one last show despite hating each other and in fact Bing and Bob Hope had tried to purchase it for themselves but their offer of $1M was refused. George's performance won him the 1976 Academy Award for best supporting actor. He also received a Hollywood award as the year's most promising newcomer (at the age of 80!). In 1977 he played the title role in 'Oh, God!' and repeated the role in two sequels. He made many personal appearances even reprising the 'Burns & Allen' act with a young actress. It had been his ambition to appear at the London Palladium when he attained the age of 100 but sadly his health did not permit this and he was not well enough to participate in his century celebrations in Hollywood.

Greer Garson - passed away on April 6. She first came to stardom for her role in 'Goodbye Mr Chips' (1939) and she got an Oscar for her portrayal of 'Mrs. Miniver' (1942). Other notable films were 'Random Harvest' (1942), 'Madam Curie' (1944), 'That Forsyte Woman' (1949) and 'Sunrise at Campobello' (1960). Her connection with Bing? They both made guest appearances in 'Pepe' (1960).

IT WAS A SWINGING BING AT SOUTHPORT

We mentioned in an earlier edition of BING that member Jim Cassidy had sent us some negatives of Bing playing golf at Southport in 1972 and to accompany some of these we thought it would be nice to reprint Ralph Harding's account of that day. The Crosby Collector of Christmas 1972 (the 67th. and final edition of that magnificent publication in fact) carried the article under the above heading and continued as follows.

Yer actual Editor was with Bing at the Texaco Pro/Am and followed him around...

On the first tee, just outside the Club House of the famous Southport and Ainsdale Gold Club, surrounded by thousands of Bing fans, golf fans and those gentle folk who had come along merely to see the celebrities swing a club or three, Bing Crosby gave a flashing grin and stepped up to the mike. He was wearing a pair of blue golfing slacks, an open necked shirt and a dirty red pullover which (I could plainly see) had a few holes - either due to moths or pipe ash. Tucking his iron under his armpit, he looked around at the crowd. After a few preliminaries such as "It's nice to be here" and "thank you for such a great welcome" etc., Bing regaled the crowd with a story of Bob Hope. It appears that one day, Bing was playing Bob and Bob had got himself a new caddie. "Now tell me," said Bob, "Are you a good caddie?" The caddie nodded vigorously. "Do you know the lie of the green?" continued Hope. "Have you paced out the course?" "Have you measured every hole?" "Are you familiar with every hazard, every bunker?" "Have you checked on the wind direction?" "Do you know the best club to use for each shot?" To all these questions, Bob's caddie nodded agreement or answered in the affirmative. Bob seemed satisfied. Then finally he asked the caddie, "Are you any good at finding balls?" "Yes, indeed!" said the caddie. "Good!" said Bob, "Well find me a ball and I'll start the game!".

For me, your lucky Editor, it all started with my annual pilgrimage to Leeds. I was staying overnight with my friend and fellow Crosby enthusiast, Charlie Tupper, at the house of Keith and Kath Parkinson. We arrived after a long motorway drive at Preston and made our way to the wilds of Hoghton. The Parkinson hospitality is legend and later that afternoon, reader Jim Cassidy and his wife drove over from Burnley in Lancashire and that same evening we drove to Blackpool to see the famous illuminations and to renew our friendly acquaintance with yet another member of the Crosby clan, Arthur Williams and his family. It was not until that evening we discovered that Bing was flying in from London to participate in the Texaco Pro/am Golf Championship at the Southport Golf Club, and as we were staying within 25 miles of the course, it was decided we would all drive over to Southport to see the golf tourney and take a chance on

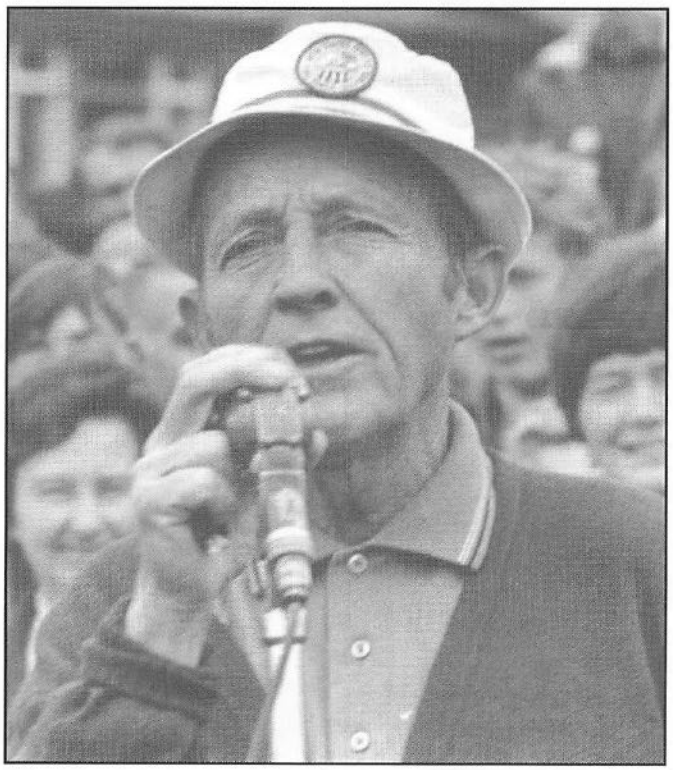
seeing and meeting Bing. Arthur Williams decided to drive over from Blackpool on the Sunday.

And so on Sunday 24th. September 1972, at the crack of dawn (at least, that's how it seemed to your Editor), we all piled into a couple of cars and speeded over to the seaside town. Bing was not due to arrive until 11.00 a.m. and we had some time to wait. Eventually, at 11.15, a police panda car turned the corner leading a large grey Rolls Royce which drew up outside the clubhouse. Bing stepped out of the car and the police tightened their cordon. However I managed to slip past the cordon and greeted Bing. He recognised me immediately and grinned, " Why hello Ralph, nice to see you again." I had barely time to wish him luck when he was whisked away by police and officials to the clubhouse. Within minutes he was out on the first green with his partners Bruce Forsyth and South African professional Gary Player. The trio of players were introduced to the milling hordes of people pressing up as close as they could to the guy ropes but the amplifiers were working badly and it was not until Bing gave his little introductory speech that all went well. Bruce Forsyth was in a clowning mood and kept the crowd roaring with laughter. Bing was obviously very happy and in top form.

At that moment, Bing was escorted by officials to the 'autograph' tent. This was not to autograph spectators' programmes but to sign a special golf bag that was to be auctioned later. Although it was quite obvious that there was not a hope of getting to Bing, I brazenly flashed a press card which I had obtained (and that's quite a story to tell - which I'm afraid will have to be unpublished!) and followed Bing into the marquee. To say Bing was surprised to see me in the reserved tent is putting it mildly. But I feel that Bing would have approved of my initiative and if he knew the story, it would have given him a laugh.

I produced a plate for the next cover of the magazine, a picture of Bing and Rosemary Clooney and asked Bing to sign it. "Now just where would you like me to sign, Ralph?" enquired Bing. "Right across Rosie's bosom, if you please!" I said, handing Bing my pen. "As good a place as any, I guess," replied Bing, laughing heartily, and his good natured laugh was echoed by the top organisers and officials who were guarding him as if he was the President of the USA...but who were beginning to wonder who this fellow was and how did he manage to get in and why was he on such intimate "Bing" and "Ralph" terms with the great man. I can only say that Bing's tolerance towards me is amazing - for to say the least my persistence could be a little wearing, even for an easy-going guy like Bing. But that's what an Editor's business is all about. And I think Bing takes an interest in this magazine and how it presents his activities.

Eventually, Bing returned to take his place on the first tee. Bruce drove off on the 206 yard hole and swung the ball over to the left on to the bank, where it bounced a couple of times and rolled down right on the green. A lucky shot to say the least. Bing made a great drive which landed him on the edge of the green and Gary played a similar shot on the green. Bruce made a magnificent (and dare I say it) lucky putt which gave him a hole in two - the hole is par three. Bing took two putts as did Gary Player. On the second hole, a 520 yarder and par 5, poor old Bing landed up in a bunker on his second shot and took two to get out. I don't think he was too pleased with this and went one over. The third was a lot better and Bing was demonstrating what a great golfer he is. The fourth and fifth holes followed and it was then that Charlie and myself had to leave to drive over the Yorkshire Moors to reach Leeds.



I had seen enough of Bing's golf to realise that he is a good player and up to professional standards. His putting was a little off that day but his driving has to be seen to be appreciated. Bing takes his golf seriously. His sun-tanned face is one of sheer concentration, although he was not familiar with the course, his shots were good and very accurate and he has a relaxed and placid manner. He is a good humoured golfer, refusing to be ruffled by a bad break.

For me, Charlie Tupper, Keith and Kath Parkinson, Arthur Williams and Jim Cassidy and his wife, and many thousands of other Bing and golf fans, it was a wonderful day. It was obvious who the attraction was and Bing was followed everywhere by an appreciative crowd.

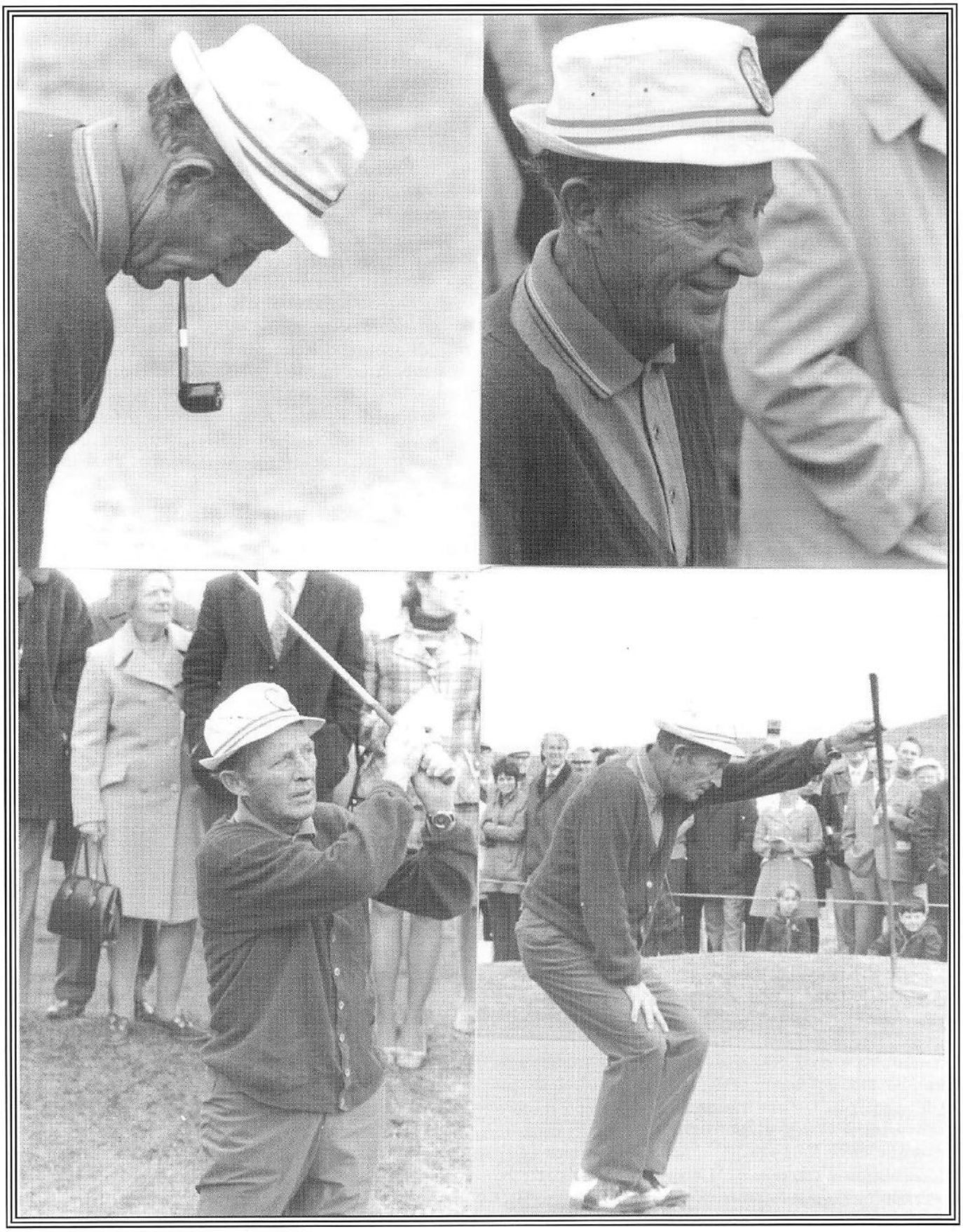
There was a total of £5,000 prize money with £750 for the winning professional and prize money for every pro (all 20 of them) down to £100 for the last player. £200 was awarded to the first pro-am team, and the net proceeds (which must have amounted to a very large sum of money because the spectator entrance charge was £1 per person) all went to The National Society for Cancer Relief. A very worthy event sponsored by the Texaco Petrol Company.

Many celebrities were present and playing, including Bruce Forsyth, Bobby Charlton, Don Revie, Johnny Giles, Gerald Harper, Henry Cooper, Eric Sykes, Colin

Cowdrey, Sir Matt Busby, Max Bygraves, Rodney Marsh, Jimmy Tarbuck, George Mitchell, Bill McGarry, Dudley Foster, Kenneth Wolstenholme, Terence Frisby. The top professionals included Peter Townsend, Gary Player, Harry Bannerman, Neil Coles, Brian Huggett, Peter Thomson, Tony Jacklin, Peter Oosterhuis, Tommy Horton, Jack Newton, Bob Charles, Tommy Aaron and others.

And so it was with some regret that Charlie Tupper and I had to leave what promised to be a very exciting tournament early in the afternoon. I had the thrill of meeting Bing and watching him play the first few holes and then it was away to Leeds to visit Michael Crampton and all the rest of the northern members at the meeting of Bing enthusiasts.

Ralph Harding



One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, and opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue.

Ed Carson, 57 Park Road East, Birkenhead, Wirral LA1 4BD

Whilst I have no wish or intention of falling out with the ICC, I really must reply to the article by Keith Parkinson about Dean Martin in the April issue, as I feel it to be very biased in favour of the Nick Tosches book, which is very much in the 'Hollow Man' vein.

Dean Martin's final years were not as portrayed. His recording career at Reprise Records was interrupted by various disputes with that company which I believe were eventually settled in Dean's favour in 1978. The 1974 album mentioned by Keith was not released until that year. In 1976, Reprise issued '20 Original Dean Martin Hits' which I believe was at the top of the US charts in that year. From the late 1960s, Dean's life was in some turmoil, both of his parents and his only brother died within a short time in addition to which he was divorced for the second time. Added to this some health problems, the seventies were not Dean's best years, although he was still making movies and some recordings. Also he was still big business in Las Vegas.

The late seventies saw more health problems for Dino but in the early 80s he was once again on tour with Frank Sinatra. In February, 1983, Dean made his first recordings for almost nine years when he went down to Nashville to record the album 'Nashville Sessions' which also featured two duets, one with Country legend Merle Haggard, the other with Conway Twitty, both done 'live' in the studio (along with the rest of the album). Dean celebrated his 66th. birthday in London with a Royal Variety Club of Great Britain lunch in his honour attended by HRH Princess Anne. This was followed by ten nights of his one man show 'An Evening With Dean Martin' which was I believe every bit as good as Bing's London concerts in the 70s. On returning home, Dean made his last movie 'Cannonball Run II'. He continued his Las Vegas work and more concert work both alone and with Frank Sinatra. Then news came of his London Palladium concerts planned for the summer of 1987. But tragedy struck Dean again, his son Dean Paul was killed in a flying accident while on a tour of duty for the military. At this point we thought that the visit would be off, but Dean showed up in London and played to packed houses on all of the dates.

On returning to the USA, he went on tour for a while with Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Junior but yet again his health began to fail and he became more and more a recluse. Those closest to him say that he never came to terms with Dean Paul's death. I feel therefore that Dean Martin was most certainly NOT a spent force as stated by Keith but mostly due to no fault of his own, Dean's later years were troubled by his own personal heartache and poor health.

I don't dispute that Dean did take it easy or that he could have done more to ensure that his legacy would be better represented than by this tendency to believe the worst as put out by authors like Goldman and Tosches. I saw Dean in concert at the Apollo Victoria and at the Palladium where I was lucky enough to meet him briefly. Believe me he was no spent force!
(Editor: The disclaimer at the front of the magazine indicates that any opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. It is my job as Editor to ensure that matters do not get out of hand and in particular that we do not fall into the trap of criticising other artists and other styles of music. I read Keith's article very carefully when it was submitted in the knowledge that he was a fan of Dean Martin and was offering a sincere view. Having re-read it, I don't think that he is very far from agreeing with Ed Carson and possibly it was the use of an occasional word which touched a nerve. However I am pleased to have the opportunity of publishing Ed's rebuttal of Keith's article.)

Clive Menadue, 5 Helig Fan, Kenfig Hill, Mid-Glam CF33 6BT

HEARING PROBLEM 1

DISTURBING news reaches me that Robson and Jerome are making a second album of "classic" covers.

Jerome Flynn has been frantically searching for new songs to croon along to with his pal. I spotted him bulk-buying in a London store the other day.

His choice? Simon and Garfunkel, Frank Sinatra and every Bing Crosby CD in the shop.

Thought I'd bring the above item from the Daily Mirror of March 20 to your notice in case you have a small unfilled slot in BING some day. Also, those of us sad people who have watched Chinese soccer on TV lately will have noted that their most expensive player is called Li Bing! He plays for Guandong, as you must have known. My, how Mr. Crosby got around in his day!

As if all this wasn't excitement enough, I watched a thriller called 'Mortals Sins' on TV a week or so back. Christopher Reeve plays a Catholic priest in it and in one

scene visits a senior cleric who displays a photograph of Bing prominently on his desk. Bing appears to be holding a couple of small dogs. It's a snap I haven't seen before. I wonder who was associated with the film who thought of that touch?
(Editor: Clive is a Bing man through and through but predictably his article in the last magazine about the Musical Autobiography set brought some varied responses as follows.)

Stan White, 57 Stanley Street, Rothwell, Northamptonshire NN14 6 EA

BING has arrived, however, at the moment the pleasure of having it in my hands is diminished because of that feature by Clive Menadue. The article made me pull out the tape of Benny Green's review of the Autobiography Set on July 11th 1993, my goodness, people criticise Benny, but what a refreshing and thoughtful review that was, compared to this negative write-up by Mr. Menadue. As far as I am concerned, Bing made good records throughout his career, but I feel that 1935 to 1955, were his best years as far as his voice is concerned. I suppose I could write an article and cause quite a lot of offence with my views on some of the records I thought were not up to scratch, before 1935 and after 1955 including his voice in a film the year after. But why should I inflict upset and misery upon people who would not agree with me. Bing is to enjoy, by everybody in their own way. What is the point of the negative ravings of Clive Menadue. Benny Green is a raving Crosby fan compared to Clive.

John Marshall, 39 Kings Rd., Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QD

Our very own Clive Menadue picking up the "Shining sword of truth" so recently laid down by Jonathan Aitken, in the wake of the Scott report left me feeling quite dejected. Lacking the Aitken good looks, money, power, height, hair, charisma, shoe-size and dress sense, he does at least capture that same elusive ability to miss out on the basic truth. Indicting what I'd been dumb enough to think of as a finest hour, convinces me that while "controversy" might stimulate the incoming mail, here's someone tampering with things he simply doesn't understand.

Today, among the gathering gloom, the first couple of sides of the Autobiography continue to provide as much pleasure as they originally did. Free from phoney bombastic production values, the "cheap" but subtle Cole and a relaxed, convivial Bing still has the three of you cosily seated around the fireside in a unique and intimate sense - which was always the intention. A rare simplicity. All these great old numbers and not a brass or string section in sight. Ignoring the final two thirds of often dodgy commercial issues was always easy and while a little more patter wouldn't have gone amiss, this WAS a most unusual musical offering. For the facts, you read a book. Choosing Vlad the Impaler as our resident pessimistic character with a crab-apple face - based on his post-1940 bias - assures me that the cold light of 1996 is no place to examine a product made at a time when innocence was a byword within Crosbyana. It will have consequences.

Michael Collins, P.O.Box 2030, Flagler Beach, Florida 32136, USA

Thank you for yet another excellent issue of BING. I am also pleased that you didn't shrink from controversy. It all makes for a more interesting magazine. Clive Menadue's article was, indeed, thought provoking, and as you say, contentious. I first came across the Musical Autobiography at much the same time as you did and like you, enjoyed it without giving much thought as to whether it constituted a fitting tribute to someone of Crosby's stature. Mr. Menadue's article has made me think again.

At the same time, his article resurrected the old controversy over the relative merits of the early and later Bing, one which I fear will not be resolved in our lifetime. Here you took issue with him and I agree with you when you said that whilst Bing's voice "had its widest range in the thirties, this doesn't necessarily mean that this was when it was at its best." Mr. Menadue is correct in saying that Michael Holliday, a derivative but excellent singer, did not have Bing's range. However I am not at all sure that vocal range is the quality for which Bing will chiefly be remembered. It is interesting to see how Henry Pleasants, one of Bing's more sympathetic critics, deals with this topic in his book "The Great American Popular Singers". He allows that "many popular singers have as wide a range as the average opera singer", notably Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and, even more spectacularly, Cleo Laine. "But", he adds significantly, "it begins lower and ends lower at the upper end of the range."

Mr. Crosby does not impress him in this regard. He thinks the younger Bing frequently overreached himself in the high notes, some of which were suspect. When he did hit them, "his voice then lost its characteristic timbre. Above the B flat it took on a tenor quality. The sound, even when the notes were securely landed, was unexceptional." This, he contends, put Crosby at a distinct disadvantage. It invited comparison with singers of the calibre of John McCormack, as well as opera baritones such as Lawrence Tibbett and John Charles Thomas, who could easily handle notes which were out of Bing's range. Even Perry Como, another derivative but fine singer, was in my opinion, superior to Bing in the upper register throughout most of his career, a fact which, as I recall, was freely admitted by Crosby himself. No, it was not for his vocal range, but rather for the incomparable tonal quality of his baritone, as well as for the innate jazz sensibility which underpinned his inimitable phrasing that Bing Crosby will forever be remembered.

Like any major artist, Crosby underwent development. This is most readily apparent in his film work. Just imagine for a moment (and then perish the thought) that his career was suddenly cut short towards the end of the 1930s. By virtue of hindsight we can clearly see how impoverished our heritage would be had this happened. No 'Birth of the Blues', 'Holiday Inn' 'White Christmas' or 'High Society', not to mention the Road pictures and the more overtly dramatic films, most of which had a significant musical content. How lightweight and insubstantial seems his pre-war achievement! Nor can

one discount the fact that Crosby's own favourite from among his movies is 'High Society', one that came relatively late in his career. It is also, many would argue, musically one of his very best.

As I have said, this is not a controversy which is likely to be resolved in the immediate future, if only because there is too much of an emotional investment on all sides. After years of listening to this debate, the late Reg Bristo came up with a theory which is about as sensible and persuasive as any I have heard. It is not an absolute and does allow for exceptions, but Reg found it broadly fitted the facts. Here's how it goes.

> *One's individual preference for a specific period in Bing's career is directly related to, if not determined by, the time frame during which one first heard him sing.*

It is an intriguing theory and one which may well recommend itself to the behavioural scientist. Reg believed that many younger people were first attracted to Bing's singing during that later period when he was getting his second wind and making lots of recordings, first with Paul Smith and then with the Pete Moore Orchestra. For these young people what they heard would forever remain the definitive Crosby sound. Going to the opposite end of the scale, one can sometimes detect a certain cliquish, hands-off-we-were-there-first attitude among the devotees of the early Bing. Not only is it detectable, but at times becomes quite explicit, especially when we are told nobody can really appreciate Bing who was not there at the very beginning to witness the tremendous impact which he had on popular music.

Irritating this may be, but it is an attitude for which I must confess I have some sympathy. These people were there at the very start. They experienced the first fever of adulation and thereafter settled down to remain loyal to their man throughout the years, even when - Flann O'Brien's favourite clich coming up - it was neither popular nor profitable to do so. They have earned their stripes; their devotion is to be commended. Nevertheless, future generations, unencumbered by such emotions and memories, will inevitably view things more dispassionately. My prediction, for what it is worth, is that Sinatra will be judged not on his early recordings with Tommy Dorsey, interesting though these may be, but on the mature Capitol years, so Bing will be judged on his later, mellow period when his technique had become assured, and, as you rightly say, he began to attract "incredible attention" across the world.

Just a few thoughts on the ongoing debate. I wish you and the magazine the very best of luck. By the way, is it possible at all to persuade Arthur Blood to issue any more of his wonderful Christmas stamps? A pity the ICC support was so tepid.
(Editor: That just has to be one of the best letters I have received for some time! There's more about the Clive Menadue article...)

Margaret Otway, 14 Barnsley Avenue, Conisborough, Doncaster DN12 3LB

Yet again may I thank you and all those who contributed to the excellent edition of BING 112. It has fast become a professional and quality magazine and I'm proud to have it on display in my home for friends and relatives to see, although they are a cherished part of my Crosby collection so they are soon squirreled away in order to preserve them. BING is full of news and amusing stories and gems of information unknown to novices like me and I even enjoy the letters from Mr Menadue. I agree that its good for the magazine to publish conflicting views and its interesting to read the opinions of other members no matter how critical.

.....As you know Mr Menadue and I have disagreed before and I'm sure we will again but even though I too don't particularly like organ music and find it something which I don't like about certain tracks that Bing and Buddy Cole did for the Musical Autobiography, I must say I still think these tracks are unique. Bing and Buddy Cole are obviously comfortable with each other and seem to run through the varied arrangements of the old favourites like two friends recalling fond memories. They obviously had great respect for one another and its nice to hear Bing telling you of his appreciation of those who helped him with his career along the way, his voice is mellow and sincere. If he had just played from beginning to end the commercial tracks of each record on the set with a few words in between then we'd have a replica of what most people already have. I know which I would prefer. Each time I listen to the set, I feel Bing is in the room sat beside me, telling his story quite intimately and I look forward to his next visit.

Les Street, 8 Wyfan Place, Mynachdy, Cardiff CF4 3DT

Many thanks for BING 112. A really tremendous issue. From the great front cover with a still from a super Bing film and my favourite scene from any Bing film, what a great job he did of that 'Rhythm On The River' sequence. Enjoyed as usual the "Letter from Leslie" - so full of news and such wonderful nostalgic memories. I've got the video of John Marshall's interview with Howard Crosby and I think it is just great.

The article 'Just An Echo' by Clive Menadue I found very interesting as when I first got the Bing set mentioned I also was very sad that it did not contain the original recordings. I've since grown to love the set.

Frank Brannigan, 140 Biscayne, Malahide, Co. Dublin, Ireland

As I haven't written to you before may I take this opportunity to congratulate you on the continuing success of BING. In the last issue, Lionel Pairpoint posed a query regarding 'Bing' Russell. Well digging down to the recesses of my fast fading memory, I seem to recall a newspaper article about a bit player (a very small bit) who had changed in name to Bing Russell because of his high regard for 'Sir Boss'. Previously I think he had been

known as Clem or Slim Russell but I can't be sure. I think this name change occurred in the 1960s although Lionel mentions the film 'The Horse Soldiers' released in 1959. There was a Russell Simpson in that film but he is not the Russell in question. However, I think it was just a gimmick.

In the article about Bing (the real one) on the Internet, reference was made to Bing's 'Merry Christmas' album. I have always been interested in this album. It was released by Decca in 1947 on four 78s and although the 1947 version of 'White Christmas' was used, 'Silent Night' was the 1942 version. When Decca re-released the album in 1954 on a 10" LP, they used the 1947 recording of 'Silent Night'. This LP was extended to a 12" LP in 1963 with four additional songs and although there wasn't a Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral in sight the County Kerry connection was maintained with the inclusion of 'Christmas in Killarney'. This 1963 version of Merry Christmas was belatedly awarded a gold disk by the R.I.A.A. in 1970. The 10" LP sold half a million in two years and up to 1976 the 12" version was selling at the rate of 200,000 annually. At that time it was recognised as one of the biggest selling albums with sales of around 14,000,000 and second only to the 'Sound of Music' at 17,500,000. In one form or another the Merry Christmas album has been selling for nearly 50 years on 78s, LP, cassettes, 8 track cartridges, open reel and now is still being enjoyed on CD.

I am sorry Clive Menadue was so disappointed with Bing's Musical Autobiography. I don't think it was intended to be anything more than Bing reminiscing about songs and recordings which were milestones in his career. Of course it would have been very interesting if he had used John Scott Trotter or any of the big bands as a backing but that wasn't what he wanted. I didn't at the time particular like the format used and so I did what I am sure others did i.e. I made some tapes and substituted the new recordings with the originals. That was back in the 50s but at present I listen to the commercial version on CD and I thoroughly enjoy it. As was pointed out, Bing had a lot to offer in the 50s and 60s and he did make quite a number of beautiful recordings in the last 20 years of his life, but there again it's all a matter of opinion.

George Patmore mentioned the different arrangements of songs Bing performed on radio and in his films. I too very much enjoy these and I often feel some are much better than the commercial issues. Just listen to the radio versions of 'Begin the Beguine' and 'Night and Day' from 1953, nine years after the 1944 commercial recordings. The radio version of 'September Song' and the soundtrack version of 'Moonlight Becomes You' are among my favourites. 'It Could Happen To You' sounds much better on the V disc issue.
(Editor: Frank is a most knowledgeable Crosby follower as will be apparent from his letter. Much of the information about the 'Merry Christmas' album was new to me.)

Chris Linton, Old Fleet Manor, 2 Yew Tree Rd., Hayling Island, Hants PO11 0QE

I was reading a old book recently called 'Five Chimneys' by Olga Lengyel which was originally published by Panther Books of 8 Grafton St., London W1X 3LA. This is a true story about a woman's survival from Auschwitz concentration camp. I thought you might be interested in the following extract. It concerns the articles left behind belonging to victims of the gas chamber.

"We even found several phonograph records in one suitcase. An old inmate, hungry for music, hurriedly put one on a little portable phonograph which we had found in the luggage. A beautiful clear voice sang a Christmas Carol. We were touched. The other prisoners halted in their tasks and listened.

A German guard, evidently hearing the music, rushed into the room. He kicked the phonograph with his boot and smashed the record. When we gathered the pieces, I read the label. We had been listening to 'Silent Night' sung by Bing Crosby. For a few moments the American Crooner had helped us to forget our lot at Auschwitz."
(Editor: A very powerful and moving extract which rather puts things in perspective doesn't it. In such a terrible place, one can only imagine the pleasure Bing's voice must have brought to those listening to it. We all have episodes in our lives when Bing's voice meant a lot to us but I cannot remember reading quite such a poignant example before.)

Bob Sharp, 44 Queenborough Gardens, Gants Hill, Ilford, Essex IG2 6XZ

I noticed in the latest issue of BING (page 16) that Mel Torme's comments that Bing seems to be the forgotten man of popular music have come up again. While I hope Bing will never be completely forgotten, I suspect the reason why he seems to have faded is that Bing was a comparatively old man when he died and had been entertaining us for over 50 years with his marvellous voice. The likes of Elvis Presley died whilst still rather young and still in his prime and is therefore remembered whilst at the top. I wonder if other members and Mel Torme agree?
(Editor: A valid point from Bob and I am constantly amazed at how James Dean and Buddy Holly, for example, remain so famous after very short careers when they might well have faded away if they had not died so young.)

John Fleming, 12 Middle St. North, Driffield, East Yorkshire

Congratulations on your great research work which brings so much enjoyment to the readers of BING. Only real Bing men and women can appreciate the influence he maintained for so many years. The demand for his records, radio shows, films, personal appearances etc. must have been almost unbearable to any ordinary human being, yet he was still news after 50 years. I have been a Bing man for over 60 years and I still enjoy a session with my old 78s on my record player, some still bear the price of 1/-.
I joined the British Bing Crosby Club thanks to Les Gaylor

whom I contacted after seeing a letter from him about Bing in the Daily Mirror. When Bing came over here to make 'The Road to Hong Kong' I asked Les if I could meet Bing. Les told me to contact Bing's secretary, Mrs Smith, at Shepperton Studios but because of the effect the possibility of meeting Bing was having on me, I asked my wife to phone the secretary on my behalf. The first reaction from Mrs Smith was "I'm afraid that Mr Crosby is practically snowed under with requests for his time, magazines, newspapers, film commitments, trying to fit in golf....". My wife listened until Mrs. Smith drew breath and then she told Mrs Smith that she was not asking the favour for some starry eyed teenager but for someone who has been a Bing admirer since he was 14 years of age, served 6 years in the last war, including 3 years in the Far East, was a good husband and father of four children and who would be so happy if his dream of meeting Bing came true.

Mrs Smith relented and gave my wife a date two weeks later for us to meet Bing and it was arranged that we would telephone the day before to make sure it was still all right. My wife duly rang me at the factory the day before and I had to ask the Manager for time off. He queried whether there was any particular reason and I said "Yes, I have an appointment to meet Bing Crosby." He laughed and said that at least I was original! He had to change his tune a few days later when I brought in two large glossy photographs of me with Bing.

My meeting with Bing was something I'll never ever forget. There we were in his dressing room, my wife and I, sitting with the biggest name in show business. We chatted for 15 minutes and then had our photograph taken.

After a while, Bing suggested that we should watch Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour film a scene. Later as we were about to leave the studio, Bing came along with Howard Keel and said "Good-bye, Mr Fleming." Then he shook my hand and asked if I had enjoyed myself. I said "Bing, I'll never ever forget this day." Bing replied, "That's fine. Give my regards to your girls."

Three days later, the photos (and the negatives) arrived and I had dozens of prints done to send to my folks in Scotland and anyone else I could think of. I wanted to tell the world! At the factory, people would come up to me and ask to take one of the photographs home to show their relatives, all of whom had said that they had always loved Bing. I used to just look at the photo, unable to believe that an ordinary bloke like me could sit with a super star like Bing.

John Benstead, Rotherhithe, London SE 16

I suppose that my first conscious contact with the Crosby voice occurred at The Den, Millwall F.C.'s ground, in the late 1930s as a small boy accompanying my father, a regular supporter Bing's 78 version of 'Shoe Shine Boy' was and still is sometimes, the club's signature tune and is played as the team takes to the field. Why 'Shoe Shine Boy' I don't know but it's the only football club I know of that celebrates our man in this way, unless someone knows better.
(Editor: I believe that Everton F.C. used to use Bing's version of 'Once More The Blue And White' at one time but I don't know of any other sports clubs which employ a Bing record in this way. Is Bing still used at Del Mar I wonder? Anyone know why Millwall use 'Shoe Shine Boy'?)

John Stiles, Newlands, 10 Barnhill, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 2SX

Two subjects which may be of interest.

1. The Hollywood Musical by Etham Morden. This book was borrowed from our local library and Bing receives honourable mention on several pages. The author, who appears to be a comparatively young man, has researched the subject well and appears also to be quite perceptive with his assessments. The chapters on more recent musical periods are not to my taste but I enjoyed reading about the 30s and 40s in particular. He did not single out Bing's earlier vocal abilities sufficiently however.

2. A Handful of Riffs - Eddie Lang. I came across this LP in a record second-hand shop at Greenwich. I was surprised to learn that Eddie (or Blind Willie Dunn on some tracks) warranted an LP (published 1989). You may be familiar with this LP but if not, the tracks range from 1.4.1927 to 5.10.1929. There are two - Jet Black Blues and Blue Blood Blues - recorded by Blind Willie Dunn's Gin Bottle Four, who include a musician providing "miscellaneous percussion and scat vocal, believed to be Hoagy Carmichael." The vocals are short but at certain times sound quite like Bing Crosby. Both recordings were made on 3.4.1929 in New York City. By a coincidence, Bing recorded in New York with Paul Whiteman on 5.4.1929. The percussion sounds are a bit home-spun so there is a possibility it could be Bing. Hoagy is not included in the other tracks. The personnel on the two tracks in question are listed as "Blind Willie Dunn (Eddie Lang), Lonnie Johnson (guitar), Joe 'King' Oliver (cornet), J. C. Johnson (piano), probably Hoagy Carmichael (miscellaneous percussion and 'scat' vocal)."
(Editor: John has sent me a cassette of the two tracks and it certainly could be Bing! I am seeking opinions

from others. Eddie Lang was a guitarist so why did he want Lonnie Johnson as well? Hoagy Carmichael did not join Whiteman until later in the year but he could have been in New York. Anyone else who likes to contribute would be welcomed.)

John R. Teale, 4 Rack House Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester M23 0BN

Thank you for the April issue of BING which was up to its usual standard. I would like to offer some details in answer to the queries raised by John Sawbridge in his letter to you. The song 'Lost in a Fog' was written by Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh. It was featured in a film 'Have a Heart' in 1934. The recordings I have of the song comprise of one version by Ella Fitzgerald in the album 'Like Someone In Love' recorded 1960; and another by Connie Boswell from an album 'The early Solos 1931-1935'. The Connie Boswell version was recorded 4/10/34. Another song which appeared in the film was 'Thank You For a Lovely Evening' - composed by the same writers. Bing recorded it in 1968 for the Longines album.

John's experience with regard to tuning in to a radio programme, reminded me of an incident, the date of which I can't pin down but I think it was the summer of 1935. Anyway the incident was that I was doing a chore in the garden when my father called me in to hear a broadcast from a liner on the Atlantic. The broadcast was of Bing singing 'Easter Parade'. I've pored over the many biographies and Bing's autobiography, but there was no mention of him travelling to Europe before the war.

Coming back to music, I was intrigued by the photograph of the song-sheet on page 20 of the April issue. It states that the song 'Where Are You (Girl of My Dreams) was introduced by Bing; and yet I can't find a trace of him recording it. Did he introduce it on the radio? My only recording of the song is by Al Bowlly.
(Editor: As we know, Bing did not record 'Easter Parade' until 1942 but he might have sung it on the weekly Woodbury shows which finished on June 11, 1935. Certainly Bing did not cross the Atlantic until 1944. He was in New York in August, 1935 but that appears to be the nearest he got to the Atlantic. He did sail to Hawaii in September, 1936 and to Bermuda in September, 1939 and perhaps he broadcast from the ship on these trips? Suggestions would be welcome. 'Where Are You' was indeed introduced by Bing on the Cremo show on 13 February, 1932.)

LIONEL'S LINES

"....I KNOW WHERE THE SUN SHINES BEST"

Mother was an actress. I can say that quite unequivocally. She had an instinctive feel for 'theatre'. Her speech was sprinkled with 'key' words, dramatically 'pointed' at some distant corner of an imaginary gallery, where, on hearing just these few, carefully articulated and emphasised syllables, the whole essence of the sentence would be unlocked, even to the deafest ear or dullest mind - "Don't think you're coming out with me, in that state.... Go and clean yourself up."

"And take that belt off and put your braces on... You look like a bundle tied up in the middle" - It is the first day of the school holidays, beginning a week of traditional, annual outings to local places of interest - enjoyable enough but apt to be hamstrung by parental restraint and much the same applied to our week 'away'. We never aspired to a 'guest' or 'boarding' house but my aunt had married a soldier who had a happy knack for wangling postings which were always within rifle-shot of the sea. The drawback was Aunt Tilly's tapioca pudding. If a link had been discovered between tapioca pudding and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, I would be assured of life long immunity, from a stead fast refusal to allow this speciality of the house to pass my lips.

At the beach, Mum's caring advice was ever present - "Don't go in the water" although even she seemed to acknowledge the absurdity of this injunction (after a whole year, away!) which was then tempered with, "Not till you've got rid of that runny nose". Another daily admonition was, "No, you're not having another ice cream, you'll be having your dinner in a minute". Have you noticed that mothers are adept at employing, a certain sort of time warp, to their advantage? In this example, "dinner" was three hours away but conversely, she claimed that, it took me "all day" to tie a shoe lace. And I'm positive that it was she who originated the classic, "If you fall off that rock and break your leg, don't come running to me."

But seated in the charabanc on the way home, I could afford to gloat, with the awareness that the next four weeks were mine, all mine! There were wigwams to build, trees to climb, streams to be dammed and rafts to be launched. Of course, there was also, "Don't go too far.... and don't you dare go near those Rough Lots". I should explain, that to a small boy, the "Rough Lots", although only a few acres of waste land, were the Disneyland of their day. There were interesting hummocks and hollows with course grass, scrubby trees and bushes which on occasion would double for the Badlands of Dakota. A rust-coloured pond, entirely surrounded by pungent mud, simulated "Grympton Mire", for a re-enactment of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" ("Come along Watson, we've not a moment to lose!") and oil drums, brickbats and odd pieces of timber could be fashioned into a replica of Fort Zinderneuf, for an action replay of "Beau Geste" but then, having donned our 'kepis' (school caps, inside out and a handkerchief protecting our necks from the desert sun), there was the inevitable argument about who should play "Sgt. Markoff" ("This, I promise you!").

Sometimes, it was a real-life battleground and I recall the day when our little company of dreaming aesthetes was savagely routed by Nobby Norris and the White Slipper Gang (augmented with two"hired guns" from East Barnet). I limped home, haemorrhaging badly and in urgent need of open knee surgery, to be greeted with,

"What have you been up to, again .... I hope you haven't got blood all over those new socks ....Wait until your father gets home!" Like most homecoming fathers, Dad was the recipient of those 'one-liners' which, with a little imagination, will reveal the full story of the day's most dire misdeed - "He's made a catapult" or, "Have you seen what he's done to your saw?" or, "He chalked a goal on the wall next to Mrs Drayne's back window" and worst of all, "He says he was trying to bend a nail on the gas-pipe" - Pater was a man of few words and although he did display flashes of mother's histrionic skill, he was more an exponent of the 'Method' school of acting and a master of that silent but physical ability to instruct and guide.

Yes, there was sunshine and tears in those far-off summers, as well as laughter and rain but contentment could still be found, even on a wet day, with William Brown and the Outlaws, Captain James Bigglesworth or my chums from Greyfriars and St Jims .... "Are you listening to me or have you got your head buried in a book, again?" - (Silence) - "I said, do you want to go to the pictures?" The famous "speeding bullet" would have run a panting, puffing, poor second to this cinema junkie. A brief encounter with a damp flannel, some dalliance with a comb and I was reporting at the point of embarkation before Mum had got her hat on.

We saw a lot of movies together and at that age, I wasn't 'picky'. I found some merit in all of them but there was one film, which I was not to see again for more than forty years, that fuelled my aspirations to stardom. I wasn't overkeen on the hero's wimpish wife or the songs which (with one exception) were unfamiliar ....Wait a second - I'll let you in on the plot. There are these kids, see. They actually *live* on a *train* and they're racketing around the country, amidst a hectic montage of dwindling railtracks and exotic place names, doing shows. There's this carriage that has a *piano* in it where *auditions* are held and there's this obnoxious girl who, point blank, refuses to do her party piece .... hang on .... I *know* the song, although it was written long before I was born. My lips silently form the words, miming, in perfect synch with the hero, until the last "now", as he attempts to coax a performance from her, by singing the song, himself. The very next thing we see, is the front page of a newspaper with this dumb cluck's face on it, under a banner headline, "Broadway Bound!" Would you believe it? She's done absolutely *nothing!* - In spite of being coached by the best warm-up man in the business! Porter, here's my suitcase and sixpence, get me on that train!

At the end of 1947, the song enjoyed a revival. By this time, I was buying my own records and acting on the naive assumption that Bing Crosby must have recorded everything he'd sung on the screen, I though that I might acquire it. As you may guess, I would still be searching today and only sheer pique at the 'ineptitude' of shop assistants prevented me from settling for the Perry Como version of, "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now". Some fifteen years were to pass, before I discovered that there were two surviving renditions from radio and our crooner had sung the second, on the Philco Radio Time, at just

about the time that I was making my fruitless search of the record stores.

Bing Crosby's commercial recording career seems to have been pretty well mapped our for him - "It was Jack (Kapp) who formulated my recording plans. He even selected the numbers I sang .... whatever he told me to do was right". Nevertheless, Bing was nobody's pushover and there is evidence that he could be quite 'ornery' regarding both the choice of song and presentation. Surely, he had more freedom over what he might sing on radio and indeed, in 1940, during one of those regular ASCAP disputes, when his new contract was to be reviewed, he served notice that it would only be acceptable with an inserted clause, allowing his withdrawal, if or when ASCAP songs were no longer available for his broadcasts. At the same time Larry Crosby is quoted as saying, "Bing 'eats up' about five tunes a week and the only place he can get them is through ASCAP". This is somewhat of an exaggeration and does not allow for repetition. An analysis of his broadcasting output shows that, averaged out, the figure was closer to three titles per programme.

A weekly radio series would seem to be an ideal showcase for a singer to endlessly, 'plug' samples from his own recording endeavours but in Bing's case this was rarely overdone and it may be interesting to look at some of the lesser heard items that were broadcast. The Philco series contained its fair share of these oddities, quite a few of which were only ever heard once, on the air.

For instance, there is a solitary showing for "(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66" (3.10.46). Bing had already had a Top Twenty hit recording, with the Andrews Sisters and personally, I have always found this excursion, rather subdued, if not, jaded. On radio, it bubbles along that famous highway, transporting a mixed choir in lieu of the Andrews gals but by this time he's picked up a few wrinkles along the way and we hear, "Acquire/Accumulate your kicks ...." and "Take a trip" - "(Where's my grip)". You can see why this kind of ditty originates in the USA. Try it with the M4 and you're down to," .... two hundred miles all the way" or "Reading,

Swindon, Michaelstown-Y-Fedw" - Not quite the same ambience, eh?

Here's another 'one-off' from the programme of 6th November 1946. Andy Russell took "Pretending" to No. 10 in the charts in August of that year, three months after Bing had recorded the song. It was successful in this country in October 1946 but Bing's recording was not issued by Brunswick until a year later, in September 1947. So, what happened? The song was another revival, having provided a hit for Rudy Vallee, in 1929. We shouldn't be too churlish about the tune which owes more than a little to Delibes' Waltz from Coppelia and many would have been contented with the lyrics. Give the poet credit for knowing their market. In addition to allowing them scope for more fanciful lyrical flight, the themes of 'make-believe', 'day-dreaming', 'imagination' and 'pretend' have invariably been 'sellers'. Again, compared with the Philco version, the recording sounds too slow and we're not talking nanoseconds. Bing takes almost, a full half-minute more, just to sing the first chorus, giving substance to the theory that quite a few of his records from the mid-Forties suffered from a mild decrease in mph, due to some mechanical inexactitude or, more bizarre, that this was a deliberate, if misguided attempt to maintain and reinforce the 'The Old Groaner' image.

No comparisons can be found for the next item. It would not be surprising if this was the only time that "Should I Tell You I Love You?" (13.11.46) was ever broadcast. Only one reference to anyone having recorded the song can be found and I can't even recall Benny Green mentioning it but here's 'the crunch'. The composer was Cole Porter! The song is indecently short, consisting of eight lines - one less than "True Love" which at least, has the bonus of a verse. Bing forsakes both the verse and an 'interlude' that was written and with feeling, delivers a single chorus, leaving us badly in need of more. The song comes from Porter's biggest flop, "Around The World" which lost $300,000 in a day, at the time when musicals were being produced for a $100,000. The arch villain was the flawed genius, Orson Welles, who wrote the book, (based on Jules Verne's novel), produced, directed, starred and no doubt, laid the sand for the desert scene. He was fortunate enough to recoup some of the losses by selling the movie rights to Mike Todd who made an Oscar winning picture without any assistance from either Welles or Porter.

Similarly, there have been very few 'takers' for another tune used in the series. In 1946, Ira Gershwin rummaged through his late brother's portfolio in search of a score for the Fox film, "The Shocking Miss Pilgrim", starring Betty Grable and Dick Haymes. The prime ballad of the piece turned out to be, "For You, For Me, Forevermore" (8.1.47), a song tailor-made for Bing and there will be those who wish that he had found the time to record it. Here are Ira's thoughts, from 'Lyrics On Several Occasions' (after having recently purchased an album with the same title as his song) - "The young lady who sang had a pleasing voice, the orchestral background was good. But what happened to:
'What a lovely world this world will be
With a world of love in store -
For you, for me, forevermore'

.... She sings this as:

'What a lovely world this world would be
With a love that can endure -
For you, for me, for evermore'.

Which changes tense and sense and suddenly rhyme doesn't chime. In the sleeve notes the vocalist is quoted: 'No, I don't read music .... all my own training was by ear.' Good girl - but how about reading the words?" - You will be delighted to know that our Mr Crosby's rendition doesn't let the side down!

The same cannot be said for Rodgers and Hart's, "You Are Too Beautiful" (30.10.46), written in 1932, for the Al Jolson vehicle, "Hallelujah, I'm A Bum". Having already used the song twice, in quick succession, for Kraft, Bing doesn't repeat it, on Philco, until 10th November 1948 but in the interim, a a subtle and apparently, irrevocable change has overtaken the lyric: ".... And I am a fool for beauty" becomes, " .... I'm such a fool for beauty" and " .... It's not through a sense of duty" becomes, "It's not through some sense of duty." His 'official' recording didn't appear until December 1953 and this exhibits exactly the same minor changes. There's no point in referring to the song's three outings on General Electric, they are all identical and are merely, the version that was mastered for commercial release - No, it's not important. I just thought you might like to know because I have this mental picture of Bing, licking his pencil and saying, "I dunno what you were up to, Larry but I think 'some' and 'such' 'll go better there" and amending his song copy, accordingly.

On 30th April 1947, one of Bing's introductions would have had everyone reaching for their discographies, "I recorded this song some years ago but apparently, even that didn't stop it from being revived again, this year. Just can't kill a good song". Any number that combines the talents of Gus Kahn, Harry Akst and Richard Whiting has got to have something going for it but I think we will wait in vain for Bing's record of "Guilty". Perhaps, he had some vague remembrance of the only other time that he sang it on radio, for Cremo, a copy of which survives but you may prefer this more mature and polished version from Philco.

Another announcement, from the same series, runs thus, "Here's what I would consider a well-written song - has a touch of class and still it's in, shall we say, 'le mode populaire'." I rarely 'knock' the efforts of composers, particularly, when I'm up against a statement like this, from Bing Crosby and I would say, "If it's so good, sing it again - it may grow on me" - But he never did. To my ears "Why Must Love Be Such A Random Thing?", combines a dull melody with a desultory lyric and extra frustration has been caused because no reference book identifies the culprit(s) - I shall have egg on my face if it's one of my idols! I suspect its origins to be 'internal'. There is little doubt that 'favours' were dispensed and not

only to the ubiquitous song-pluggers. Some nepotism appears to have been involved and there are examples of songs being broadcast which had been penned by scriptwriters, resident musicians, guests and executive personnel and to be fair, a few enjoyed a measure of success.

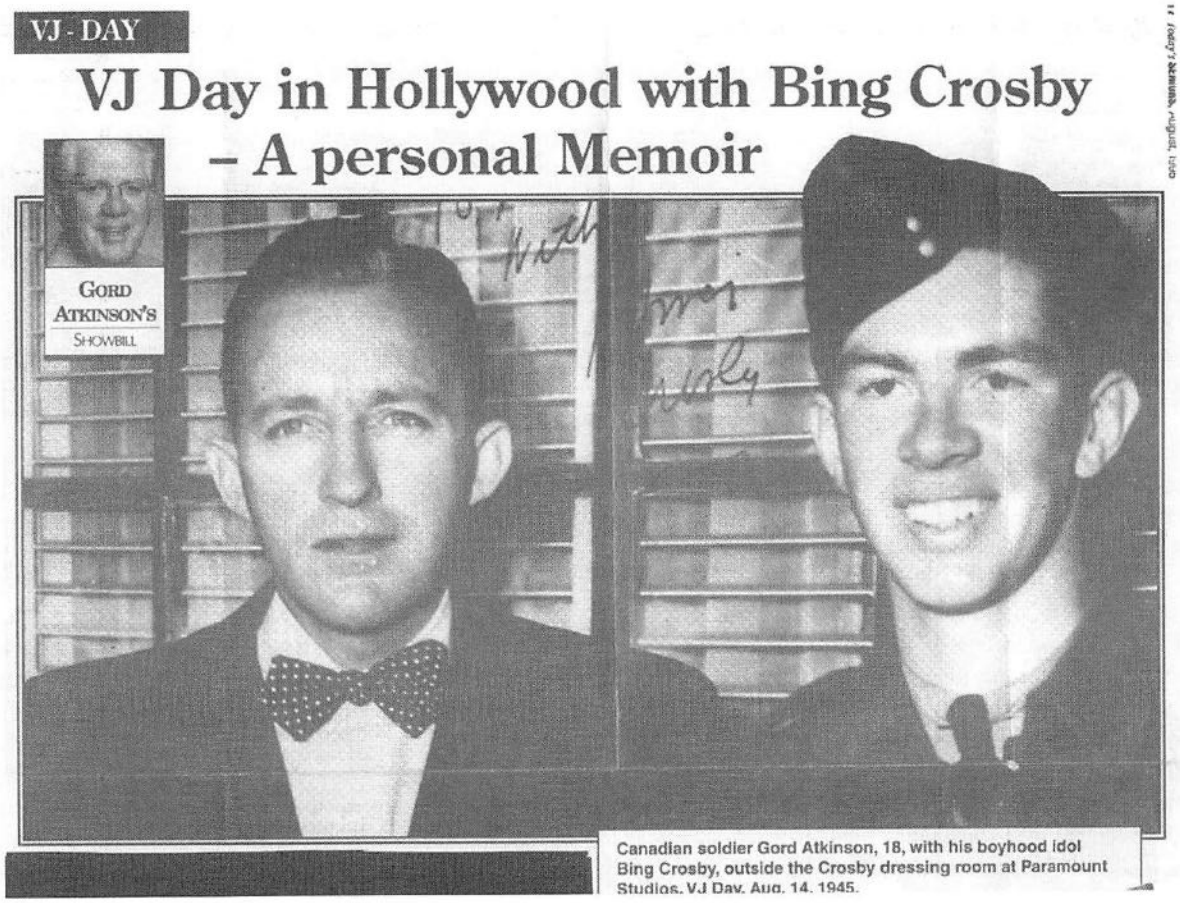
Here's a number that's got to be regarded as a 'standard'. Written for an obscure revue, in 1929, featured in more movies that either "Star Dust" or "Begin the Beguine", sung by almost everyone but a 'hit' record for none and a solitary success for the composers. If you were asked if Bing had ever sung, "I May Be Wrong (But I Think You're Wonderful)" you might have to ponder a while before coming up with this example from 28th April 1948. He sings two choruses, the second, slightly more upbeat, than the first and it is made to measure for accompaniment by Buddy Cole and indeed, there is a duet with Rosemary Clooney, from later in his career but this is the only stand-up, solo version.

His 'film' songs which were current during the span of the Philco series but only used once, include, "Smile Right Back At The Sun", "Country Style", "I Kiss Your Hand Madame", "Getting Nowhere", "Lazy" and a Burke and Van Heusen song, written for "A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court", that he never sang in the movie. "When Is Sometime?" was performed by Rhonda Fleming and so, her duet, heard on radio (18.5.49), with Bing is quite unique. The quest for an actress to play 'Lady Alisande' almost equalled the search for 'Scarlett O'Hara'. Bing wanted Deanna Durbin but Paramount were troubled by her declining popularity and it is reported that he made a special trip to New York to check on Mary Hatcher who was starring in "Oklahoma". Other names to be bandied about and rejected were Beryl Davis ("she will probably be as popular as Dinah Shore") and Jo Stafford ("Too tall for Crosby!"). Miss Fleming did all right but would the other ladies, more noted for their singing talents, have been contented with the minimal vocal exposure permitted to her? Would Johnny and Jimmy have been obliged to shoulder an extra burden? The score had been a stumbling block from the start. The Rodgers and Hart songs, "Thou Swell" and "My Heart Stood Still" were originally, slated to be in the film and Rodgers and Hammerstein were approached to write additional numbers. The latter, demurred as he was working on their new show "Allegro" whereas Rodgers said that he would be prepared to work with another lyricist and Frank Loesser came into the frame. First it was 'on', then it was 'off'. Bing, who had the right of veto was, apparently, amenable to whoever might pick up a pen, until finally, June 13th 1947, his usual contracted composers were assigned to the picture.

"If you've finished scribbling, you can have your bath and I'll put some iodine (Ouch!) on that knee of yours". Yes, Mum goes on but needless to say, she is a pale shadow of the twenty-seven year old, slip of a girl who used to boss me around. Possibly, you have, somewhere on your person, a heart-shaped tattoo inscribed with the word "Mum", "Ma", "Mam" or "Mom" but even if you haven't and even if she's no longer around, you will still qualify to join me in a sincere toast to "Your Mother and Mine".

Lionel Pairpoint

VJ DAY IN HOLLYWOOD


VJ - DAY

VJ Day in Hollywood with Bing Crosby – A personal Memoir

GORD ATKINSON'S SHOWBILL

Canadian soldier Gord Atkinson, 18, with his boyhood idol Bing Crosby, outside the Crosby dressing room at Paramount Studios, VJ Day, Aug. 14, 1945.

August 14, 1945 was a day to remember. On that date celebrations took place around the globe to mark the end of the horror and devastation of World War II. The unrestrained joy of that day is still vivid in the minds of those who are old enough to 'remember when.' Members of the armed forces and civilians alike, can recall over fifty years later, where they were, who they were with, and how they spent VJ Day.

For me it was the most memorable day of my young life. I was an eighteen year old soldier and had just completed my training in the Canadian infantry. As an incurable movie fan, I had hoped to some day visit Southern California, and when I was given an extended leave in late July of that year, I seized the opportunity to hit the 'Road to Hollywood.' Travelling from my hometown Toronto to Los Angeles in uniform afforded me every courtesy and consideration, from special rail and bus rates, to affordable accommodations.

If my first visit to the movie capital had been the inspiration for a morale boosting wartime movie, it would have been quickly rejected by the critics as celluloid fiction. The people I met and the things that happened seemed far removed from reality. It will take several columns to recall all my memories of Hollywood in the summer of '45.

When I arrived at the Los Angeles bus terminal I was delighted to read in a local paper that my favourite star, Bing Crosby, was in town for the summer, appearing before the Paramount cameras in an Irving Berlin musical called Blue Skies. An enthusiastic teenager, I was determined to somehow see Bing in person. I soon had that opportunity, when I volunteered to be one of a group of servicemen who would be responsible for crowd control at a celebrity fund-raising golf tournament for the Hollywood Guild Canteen. I was mesmerised following the Crosby foursome, and watching the effortless play of Bing, I soon forgot my responsibilities and for most of the match became part of the crowd. I managed to get Bing's autograph, and took a few treasured photographs of him in action.

Later that week I attended an armed forces radio show called G. I. Journal, with Bing as the mythical paper's editor and Claudette Colbert as his secretary. The amusing plot had Bing looking for an office boy, and a lean young man named Frank Sinatra applying for the job.

My persistent efforts to gain entrance to Paramount Pictures paid off when I entered the gates of the studio with a Canadian sailor and a group of American soldiers. We were escorted to the sets of films in production, including an Alan Ladd adventure drama set in Calcutta, and met the very popular star of the 1940s. While touring from one sound stage to the next film set, Bing came out of a studio door and walked toward our group. He was wearing a chef's hat for a scene in Blue Skies, humming a melody and snapping his fingers. He immediately put us at ease with a few jokes about his pal, Bob Hope. He asked me where I was from, and when I replied "Toronto," he said with a grin, "You had Hope up that way recently, didn't you? Pretty dull time, huh?"

A week later, August 14th, I was feeling rather depressed, when I realised I had lost my autograph book, containing personal greetings from several of the top stars of Hollywood's halcyon days. While standing outside the servicemen's hostel where I was staying, a long, white convertible pulled up, and the driver asked me if I wanted a lift. He was a kindly, older man who sensed my dismay. When I told him of the loss of the autograph book, he tried to put my mind at ease by telling me that he was one of the makeup men at Paramount.

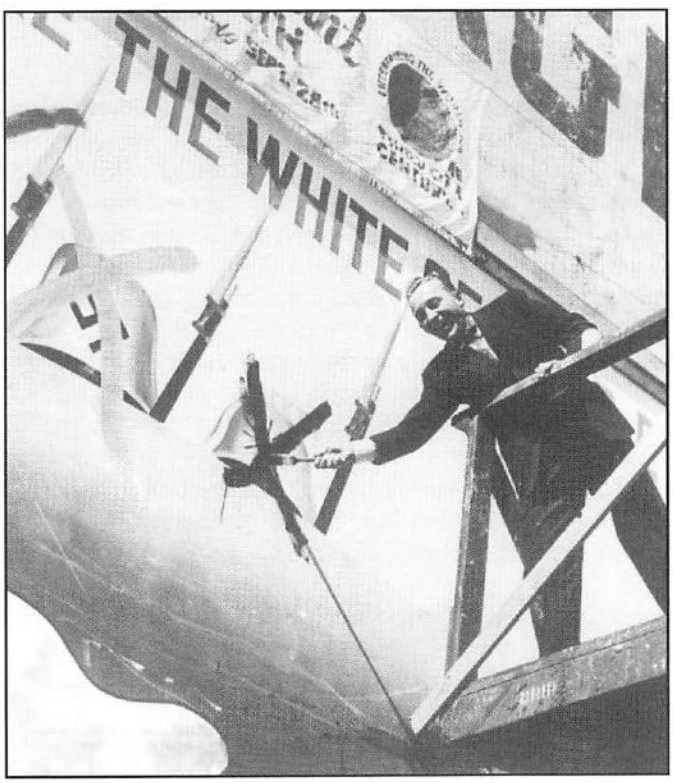
We drove through the fabled gates of Paramount, waving to the guard on duty, and parked near the studio commissary. I could hardly believe my good fortune - I felt like a latter day 'Merton of the Movies.' My considerate host took me to lunch, where I recognised cafeteria customers who were reigning stars of the era, including Robert Cummings and Barbara Stanwyck. Supporting players and extras wearing a variety of costumes and in makeup, were seated throughout the room or were in the cafeteria lineup.

Following lunch my new found friend escorted me to the Crosby dressing room. Bing was standing outside the door talking to a rising young singer-actress, Olga San Juan, who had a feature role in Blue Skies. When they completed their conversation, Bing walked towards us, and surprised me by remembering that he had met me the week before. At that point the makeup man began to tell him about the loss of my autograph book. Then there was an amusing exchange as Bing said to me, "You were wearing a different uniform," and in my confusion I referred back to the autograph book and said, "I lost it." With tongue-in-cheek he replied, "What the uniform?" I stammered, "No the autograph book," - and we both laughed. (I was wearing my battle dress uniform, having put my summer uniform in the cleaners, following a mishap with chocolate ice cream.)

The makeup man had to leave, at which point Bing invited me into his dressing room. Trying to make intelligent conversation, I asked him about his recording plans and future films. As he lit his pipe, I thought about the many times I had seen that ritual in Crosby movies. Overwhelmed at being in the presence of the world's most popular performer, and my boyhood idol, I blurted out, "Gosh! the folks back home will never believe this!" In his mellow baritone he replied, "Sure they will." Sensing my awe, he then asked me if I was free for the rest of the day, and if so, would I like to watch some of the scenes being shot for Blue Skies? Upon my response, that I was free and would be honoured to be his guest, he then suggested that he would have a photo of the two of us taken later that day. He then excused himself to study some of his lines, and I was taken by the makeup man to the main studio, where I watched the late Billy De Wolfe and another rising actress, Joan Caulfield, film scenes from the picture. I also had a chance to say 'hello' to the incomparable Fred Astaire.

By mid-afternoon, radio reports could be heard all over the lot, and it was obvious that the war in the Pacific was about to end. While it was evident for days that universal peace was only days away, when the end came at approximately 4:00 p.m. Pacific Coast Time, August 14th, pent up emotions burst like a tidal wave over Los Angeles.

It seemed that everyone at Paramount headed for the studio square, site of a war bond billboard with large images of Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo. A big letter 'X' had been painted over the first two caricatures. Suddenly voices began calling for Bing, which eventually broke into a chorus of "Crosby, Crosby, Crosby." A few moments later Bing appeared carrying a bucket of black paint and a brush. A ladder was put in place and Bing began climbing towards the billboard. While all this was happening I had been carrying on a conversation with a friendly fellow beside me, without taking my eyes off Bing. Only when my companion made a comment about the height of the sign and Bing's dexterity, did I realise that I had been having a spirited conversation with Alan Ladd!



With two sweeps of his brush, Bing placed an 'X' over the image of Tojo, and the crowd let out with a loud cheer - and took off in every direction to celebrate. Despite my own pleasure that the war was over, I was very concerned that in the excitement Bing would forget the photo. I soon became dejected when the studio appeared to be abandoned. Just as I was about to leave, convinced that I had missed the opportunity for a rare photo with Bing, he arrived around the corner with a photographer. "I had a difficult time finding one of these fellahs, so we'll have to take it right away," Bing said.

Across the street from the Crosby dressing room there was a backdrop for the wartime action film Calcutta. Bing looked across at the rubble, gave me a nudge in the ribs, and just as the cameraman clicked his shutter, he quipped, "I see they're finally getting a new dressing room for Hope."

Shortly after my arrival home the picture arrived with a personal autograph, which read: "To Gordon, with every good wish, Bing Crosby." It was the beginning of our friendship - a friendship that lasted over thirty years, and afforded me the privilege of producing and hosting the radio anthology of his life and times, "The Crosby Years."

When I left Paramount on that fateful day I was "walking on air." A few hours later I went to the Hollywood Canteen, and despite top entertainment and an impressive turnout of stars that night, after the events of the day, it was almost anti-climatic. Standing on the steps of the famous U.S.O landmark, I struck up a conversation with the prominent character actor, Elisha Cook Jr., watched the Phil Harris Band march up the street and enter the Canteen, and later stood in the packed building while Marlene Dietrich and Bette Davis danced with the more outgoing allied servicemen.

August 14, 1945 was indeed a historical day to remember and savour - especially for the men and women of our armed forces who served with great distinction and bravery overseas.

By strange Hollywood coincidence it was also the day that I decided I should pursue a career in the entertainment business - a decision that has brought me pleasure, fulfilment, happy memories, and most of all, many wonderful friends.

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: Our thanks to Gord for a fascinating article which has also appeared in an Ottawa newspaper. Gord sent a cassette to the Leeds meeting in 1995 on which he related the events of VJ Day for those in attendance and it's nice to be able to share it with all members.)

Bert Bishop's
BING ON THE BOX

What are the ingredients for an entertaining musical film? The answer might seem too obvious - outstanding performers in every department. Given that criterion HIGH SOCIETY ought to be Bing's greatest movie. An adaptation of a witty stage play from the pen of Philip Barry; a new Cole Porter score; Crosby, Sinatra and Armstrong, plus THE leading lady of the 'Fifties, Grace Kelly (who surely outshone Monroe?) and a supporting cast of the highest credentials. Indeed, this is a Bing film I can watch again and again. But is it his best? Where do you place WE'RE NOT DRESSING, MISSISSIPPI, BIRTH OF THE BLUES, HOLIDAY INN, EMPEROR WALTZ and WHITE CHRISTMAS - and I've almost certainly omitted your favourite!? Well, mine too, as it happens. Featured in June was the Bing film that I've seen more than any other (lost count) and will always remain top of my list of big production, glossy, Technicolor musicals. 'BLUE SKIES' came along just at a time when the aftermath of war was still rife. The restrictions and drudgery without quite the same sense of purpose.

Bing and Joan' dance like they used to dance....'

Despite the boy meets girl-loses girl-gets girl time worn theme, and no really new innovations, the film was tremendously uplifting, full of good songs, humour and pathos, and brilliant dancing by the greatest in the business; and, of course, the Irving Berlin score. He wrote only four new songs for the film; "Getting Nowhere", "A Serenade To An Old-Fashioned Girl", "A Couple Of Song And Dance Men" and "You Keep Coming Back Like A Song". The film title tune, along with some fifteen others, had all done considerable service in earlier stage and film productions. Magic moments for me are the Astaire routines ("Puttin" On The Ritz" - with new lyrics - being the hit of the film), Billy de Wolfe's contributions, Bing's charming and very philosophical lullaby to Mary Elizabeth and, by request, serenading his leading lady, Joan Caulfield, with "All By Myself" after the amazing but typical self-deprecating comment "So it won't be a total loss let's dance, huh?"! In fact that entire, romantic scene where the two principles engage in the 'getting to know you' dialogue sparkles with deftly handled, flirtatious humour and engaging repartee that sets the pace, tone and style of the entire on-screen romance as it unfolds, shatters and re-kindles by absence in a manner so beloved of screen writers and audiences alike. Happily, they DO still write those kind of screen romances but not encompassed within the yet to be revived musical.

So, four good but well repeated movies to record; but a scan of the ensuing list will reveal only a minimal amount of other TV Crosbyana

MAY

LET'S MAKE LOVE	Sky Movies Gold	5th
KARAOKE	BBC1	19th
HIGH SOCIETY	Sky Movies Gold	31st

JUNE

BLUE SKIES	Sky Movies Gold	6th
TWO TICKETS TO BROADWAY	Disney Channel	7th 28th
THE ROAD TO HONG KONG	Movie Channel	8th 19th
MR. MUSIC	Sky Movies Gold	13th
THE COUNTRY GIRL	Sky Movies Gold	14th
OFF LIMITS	Sky Movies Gold	21st

Just how many U.K. readers have been watching the BBC1 four-part series 'KARAOKE' I wonder. Other than his 'PENNIES FROM HEAVEN' musical drama I've never been a great fan of Dennis Potter's rather bizarre work, and only then because in the Bob Hoskins TV series there were plenty of excellent British dance band recordings (the Steve Martin film version was pretty tasteless). So, I've tended to avoid most of his dramas. Thus, I'm indebted to several members, and Trevor Wagstaff particularly for providing a video taping, for the chance to see and hear Albert Finney miming to a Crosby recording in the late Mr.

Potter's final work. Great credit to Finney and the producer for an excellent scene in which Finney, as Daniel Feeld, 'knocks em dead' with Bing's 1936 commercial release, "Pennies From Heaven". "I've always wanted to do this", he says, with great feeling, as he walks on stage. His clever miming and Bing's outstanding recording totally entrancing the mainly twenty-something audience. A nice clip and a first class tribute to Bing. Come back, Mr. Potter, all is forgiven!

The Bob Hope, Marilyn Maxwell film OFF LIMITS (aka 'MILITARY POLICEMEN') was, I believe, the penultimate Hope film to feature a visual Crosby gag spot. This time Bing appears on a TV screen with a sequence from WELCOME STRANGER wherein he is singing "My Heart Is A Hobo" whilst fishing from a boat. Sam Torrance was the recipient of Bing's solo version of "Sam's Song" whilst guesting as a panellist on the TV programme 'A QUESTION OF SPORT'. A filmed sequence of him on the green was the setting for the song at the conclusion of which the programme's presenter, David Coleman asked; "Did you like that?" "Yes," replied Torrance, "It was very nice!"

Other films and items in the listing have all been discussed in recent BING mags and readers are referred to previous issues for greater detail.

RADIO

So now it's time to turn our attention to the sounds that have been issuing forth from the crystal set, Philco Portable, 'trannie' or tuner, or whatever other means one might have of receiving those electromagnetic radio waves! From the land of his birth, via the good offices of our mainland Europe correspondent Etty Gits, came a ninety minute programme which had a twofold raison d'etre. Firstly, it was Bing's name in the spotlight in a regular series, entitled 'TRIBUTE', to commemorate the 18th. anniversary of his death and, secondly, he was featured especially to celebrate the 75th. anniversary of the birth of broadcast radio, which began in America on the 2nd. November 1920. The origin was WRPI of Troy, New York, a non-commercial station broadcasting on 91.5 FM on Thursday, 19th. October 1995 and was presented by the soft-spoken Kevin Roberts in almost reverently hushed awe of his subject in this "special dedication to the great Bing Crosby." The programme featured a great variety of Crosby material, from "Just One More Chance" from that famous first radio broadcast to include the entire 10" LP 'LE BING' - in two segments; "Where Are You", "Things Might Have Been Different", "Oh, You Crazy Moon", "Says My Heart" and "Tell Me Little Gypsy", all superb recordings from the Kraft Music Hall catalogue; and a few of the more famous 'Forties songs such as "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral", "I'll Be Seeing You" and "Only Forever". There were three Bing with Buddy Cole radio tracks and a goodly sprinkling of early 'Thirties commercial recordings, enough to gladden the heart of admirers of Bing in that era more than any other period of his singing career. By pleasant contrast there were none of the real time and time again 'best of Bing' tracks - which made it very listenable for me. Kevin receives my 'Not the Best of Bing' award for this period for being not only innovative but astute enough to appreciate Bing's rightful presence on this commemorative Special. Mr. Roberts quoted copiously from the accompanying booklet in the 'BING - HIS LEGENDARY YEARS' four-CD boxed set in which Will Friedwald sets out to analyse Bing's accomplishments, appeal and the almost intangible reason for his enormous popularity. There's hardly any doubt that it was because he did sing naturally and without any kind of artistic pretension as Friedwald implies. There was also an excerpt from Ken Barnes' book, 'THE CROSBY YEARS', interpolated in the programme which sought, also, to endorse Bing's unique influence on all those who came after. Though sometimes I wonder why we need all this analysis. Can't we just sit back, look and listen and enjoy?

Barnsey, Paul that is, continues to promote the Crosby cause up there in the East Anglia region and points east. Being no longer a 'phone-in programme he presides over the programme in a less avuncular persona of jovial whimsicality than heretofore. Now the dissertations are less about bunnies and biddies and much more about the music and artistes. Still lightly chatty, though, amusing and interestingly informative. Best described, perhaps, as an up-market Benny Green with the jibes more gentle, the criticisms kinder and, by comparison, the Crosby content quite considerable. Though we mustn't overlook the fact that B.G. has given Der Bingle substantial exposure in this period. Like most of the programme hosts, Paul has been dipping into the Boss's non-commercial albums to enhance and inform the listening public's awareness of just how much Crosby material lies beyond any previous concept of war-time hit songs spinning on 78 rpm turntables and since resurrected as so-called 'best of Bing' LPs and CDs. Regular recordings have not been ignored, though, and include many of my own favourites such as "Three Little Words", "Treasure Island", "Small Fry", "Mr. Crosby And Mr. Mercer" and "The Possibility's There", with Peggy Lee adding weight to the latter recording. Though apparently that was meant to convey ".... not so much in terms of avoirdupois but magnitude of talent!" Among the near 'pirated' material was a considerable slice from the soundtrack of BLUE SKIES which had us dancing to "Everybody Step", cavorting down in "Cuba" with Olga San Juan and hamming it up with Billy de Wolfe in the role reversal refrain "I've Got My Captain Working For Me Now". Well done, Paul, for playing the pertinently placed and vastly superior version of "Easter Parade" from a KMH programme, preceded by the near 'Ron and Eth-type' dialogue with Marilyn Maxwell, which was a feature of the programme for quite a number of weeks in 1944; for the medley with Ethel Merman and Alec Templeton and that greatly entertaining collaboration with the Mills Brothers on their early jazz classic, "Shine" (Bing's phrasing and timbre on the last line of that recording completely encapsulates what came to be known as the 'Crosby cry' - caricatured but forever inimitable) and the much later "Lazy River" - "Paper Doll" 'duet' from an October 1949 radio programme. Of these get-togethers Paul commented: "It delights me that the Boss enjoyed the company of so many guests and that they seemed to enjoy his. What a pleasure it must have been to attend those

radio sessions!" Few among us would disagree with that and would give our back teeth (assuming we've still got 'em!) to time travel by Tardis, De Lorean or the Wellsian contraption back to a particularly favoured broadcast. Off the top of my head I may very well choose the Philco Show of 5th. March 1947 when Jolson made his second appearance on Bing's radio programme. It smacks a little of the 'Desert Island Discs' syndrome and picking an all-time favourite record, which is almost impossible, but it could be interesting hearing from members on the subject.

Bill Rennells and his listeners in the BBC Radio Oxford area (as do several other area hosts) benefit greatly from Stan White's and Leslie Gaylor's constant lobbying for the Crosby cause, often through CDs supplied by Ernest Sutkowski. Though not overly adventurous, Rennell's Harmony Time has been featuring some very listenable material; "Begin The Beguine"; the enhanced version of "Straight Down The Middle" ; "As Time Goes By", and that beautiful song, beautifully delivered, "Mexicali Rose". Mandy Moreton in the absence of barely anything from namesake Peter Moreton of 'It Ought To Be Band' has been quite up-tempo with her selections: "Jamboree Jones" - Bob Haggart; "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby" - Bob Crosby; "On The Sunny Side Of The Street" - Lionel Hampton, and that terrific Johnny Mercer / Bernie Hanighen number "Bob White" - Connie Boswell and John Scott Trotter. That's quite a quota of the jazzin' Bing Crosby. Whatcha gonna swing tonight, Mandy?

Before the disappearance of David Jacobs from his regular Sunday slot as stand-in for the late Alan Dell, BBC Radio 2's Sounds Easy', the Crosby Corner, had just five more Bing tracks to feature before the final curtain fell. Initially there was Bing lecturing the Clan on the danger of messing with that old devil hooch in "Mr. Booze" - and I testify that this revival number is definitely one of my 'desert island eight' - and subsequently, rather than the titles, part of the lyric of the remaining four though hardly an exercise of any great test of skill might stop you dozing off here! So we have "Princess Kelly had me to tea."; "This is what I beg of you."; "Love, like youth, is wasted on the young." "That's what my 'pap' used to say." We thank David for his allegiance to Bing and for playing an excellent selection of our man's music in the many months since Alan Dell first became too ill to continue and his eventual demise. However, all is not lost. Read on!

Desmond Carrington now has the BBC Sunday slot from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. with a programme entitled 'All-Time Greats' and in appropriate recognition of H. L. Crosby's status within that title's framework commented; "The 'Old Groaner' has been a feature of Sunday afternoon broadcasting on Radio 2 for many years and we mustn't let that tradition lapse." That's very good news indeed. But it should be appreciated that this happy state of affairs is more due to member lobbying rather than BBC policy. In fact in letters to Leslie Gaylor the Producer, Derek Clipsham, writes: "You may not know, but the Sunday programme is now an independent production, which originates from Scotland and depends very much on a suitably-stocked library of material. The unusual nature of your CDs makes them all the more interesting."; and, "Thank you for the Bing CDs ..... and of course all the other Crosby material you've sent Desmond over the years." So it may be seen just how much 'behind the scenes' dedicated activity goes on by members of the ICC to keep the flag flying as it were. Among the material Desmond has played we have had "Fancy Meeting You Here"; "Never On Sunday"; "An Apple For The Teacher"; "San Fernando Valley", and fitting the 'unusual' tag there was Bing with 'Sugar-Throat' Burns with their musical-comedy number "It Might As Well Be Spring" from Philco No. 52, 14th. January 1948. In fact this excerpt has been played quite a few times since being released on 'The Radio Years' CD.

1 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Radio 2 embraces what is broadly called 'Vintage Years', and following on from Carrington's two hours we have an hour of Benny Green. With an unofficial 'sub-title' of a celebration of the art of the popular music composer, Benny makes the origin of the song the principle peg on which to hang the recording. Though the 'take-away' nature of CDs makes the theme of any given programme so much easier one imagines. It must be very tempting to create the entire programme from just the one compact disc, and this almost occurred when Benny featured a considerable slice of 'The Radio Years' 2-CD set. With 45 tracks to select from there was much to savour and comment upon, both good and pretty indifferent. Among the 'good stuff' there was "I Can Dream Can't I?" with Patty, Maxene and LaVerne; "The Surrey With The Fringe On Top" in tandem with the Jimmy Dorsey chanteuse Helen O'Connell; "On A Slow Boat To China" - Dave Barbour's missus Peggy Lee sharing the cruise; and, what Benny considers the best of all, "Start Off Each Day With A Song" as performed by the great Schnozzolla, more properly known as Jimmy 'Mr. Crosby I can do without that echo!' Durante. I would have to agree with Mr. Green in the even bigger question mark that hangs over the Crosby - Bacall duet "I Don't Know Why?"; and "If I'd Knew You Were Coming I'd Have Baked A Cake" is a slice of Hope and Crosby musical banter greatly in need of more palatable ingredients. That particular programme was rounded off by a track entitled "It's The Talk Of The Town" from the Living Era CD entitled 'Dick Todd - The Canadian Crosby' on which Benny commented that Todd was singing and whistling in the style of Bing in the early 'Thirties - about ten years too late! In a later programme Benny featured radio versions of "I Still Suits Me" with Peggy Lee and "April In Paris" and "Limehouse Blues" with Judy Garland, in duets taken from the two Parrot CDs. There's so many good air-shots available on compact disc these days that presenters are only too pleased to be able to ring the changes a bit and use this newly available material alongside the regular commercial releases. Benny Green is a good example of this trend for in the not inconsiderable exposure he has given to Bing in recent months I have heard just two studio tracks: "Road To Morocco" and "The Touch Of Your Lips". No complaints, of course; just so long as quality rather than curious remains the criterion.

There was an enjoyable comment from Louis Robinson of Eastern Counties Radio who revealed that his video copy

of the film BIRTH OF THE BLUES is permanently stopped at the night-club scene wherein Bing, Mary Martin, Jack Teagarden and company perform "The Waiter, The Porter And The Upstairs Maid" so that if he is ever feeling a bit down a quick flip of 'Play' on the remote control and the entire world seems a much happier place by this uplifting performance. To help prove the point he played that very song. It's certainly one of Bing's memorable moments from the silver screen and ranks highly with many I'm sure. Still ranking number two seed on the Skuesograph, Bing continues to be well featured on Keith's ten-to-midnight slot on BBC Three Counties, plus Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambs. and Northants. That's quite a lot of listeners! Daniel O'Donnell hangs on to the number one spot by the skin of his Irish teeth; but the Sinatras, Millers, Nat Coles and sundry pop performers are also-rans by popular vote. Bing came to his rescue one evening when the sports news link-up failed and poor old Keith was in a right tizz for a minute or so. Normally so precise with his timing, the break-down in communication totally threw him. Enter Bing. The only reliable friend in times of stress! "Swinging On A Star" soon had Skuesy back on course and re-established the normally Mr. Unflappable to his dignified status. Among other tracks requested or played by his own selection were "I'll See You In My Dreams"; "True Love" with Rosemary Clooney; "Surrey With The Fringe On Top" (a popular number it seems); the -A Take of the 1931 "Where The Blue Of The Night"; "Brother Can You Spare A Dime"; "On A Slow Boat To China" and, as a special treat for the winner of the trivia quiz as to who Harry Lillis was - "Everything I Have Is Yours". Whether Ken, the winner from Nether Heyford, laid claim to the implication of that bold statement I know not. But we all enjoyed Bing singing of what he would gladly give!

Among the many knowledgeable record spinners none comes more vintage by presentation or more faithful to Bing than John Gunn. Indeed, his 'Gunn Report' continues to flourish after several decades of publication. This is a 78 rpm sale, auction and exchange magazine that also features articles by keen enthusiasts and experts alike and more or less reflects a way of life for John whose programme on BBC Essex, '78 Vintage', is but an extension of his life-long love of shellac and the artistes to be found languishing within those grooves just awaiting the caress of a needle at the required revolutions. As regular listeners, and readers of this section of the magazine will know, Crosby Corner is currently occurring at 8.15 pm on a Saturday evening virtually without fail. The one miss for this time around occurred when a particular guest precluded the inclusion of a track by the 'Old Groaner'. But even those specialist programmes can be a great source of Crosbyana, for as Bing was to remind us in 1976, "There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About". However, how do you fit Bing into an hour on recordings by great British radio and music hall comedy artistes? Some might suggest excerpts from Philco Radio Time featuring Bea Lillie and Alec Templeton, but the short answer is that Bing is welcome in any company and on this particular occasion, the 1st. June, some very nice Crosby companionship was being enjoyed at a certain address in Essex and most especially when the strains of "Fancy Meeting You Here!" came over the air-waves by very kind courtesy of J.G. who had been notified of the meeting and engagingly added his own greetings to overseas ICC members Etty Gits and Stanley Wayman as well as a few members resident within the boundaries of that sprawling County bordering the northern shore of Old Father Thames' tidal estuary. It was a very nice gesture by John for, clearly, the track played was totally out of context with the central theme of the programme. Most of the Bing tracks are request numbers and it is very gratifying to note how knowledgeable many of the general listening public are, especially on his 'Thirties and 'Forties recordings. This is often by association with events, which is one of the best ways of enjoying Bing's music. Returning to John's theme nights. How, I wonder, would you include Bing in a programme devoted to under-achievers? The simple solution was to play "Sam's Song". Am I allowed a certain sense of smug satisfaction that co-duettist Gary Crosby was named as the key figure here? To illustrate the broad range of Crosby material played on '78 Vintage' we can note, further, "Mary"; "Please"; "Sweet And Lovely"; "Little Lady Make-Believe"; "Surrey With The Fringe On Top"; "That Old Black Magic"; a publicity soundtrack version of "Be Careful, It's My Heart", and, interestingly, as they are very rarely heard, a couple of evenings featuring multi-song tracks from the singalong collections. Finally, and appropriately, John Lynch, of Hemel Hempstead, who records the programme for Stan White and others out of 'earshot', had his request of "Thanks" acknowledged and fulfilled. Unreservedly, 'thanks' indeed to John Gunn and all those both on and off the air who continue to ensure that the sound of Bing remains part of the public's awareness of popular music at its best.

ERIC GRIFFITHS - A TRIBUTE

It is with sadness that Eric's death is brought to members' attention, for although he is now released from the long and distressing illness he suffered for last six years, Eric was still making the annual pilgrimage to Leeds and travelling regularly to Wimbledon record fairs, from where he would come home laden down with 78s, spreading them around the room until he had played every last one. This right up until a couple of months ago from this late June date. There are ICC members, really close friends of Eric, like Wally Oldfield for example, who are far better qualified to write this testimonial than I; although I had the good fortune to meet up with Eric on several occasions and be welcomed into his home a couple of times. But perhaps this slightly less personal contact affords the opportunity to stand back a little and be more objective in praise of a lifetime that, beyond his happy marriage, was devoted to Bing, dancing and good, popular music generally.

To sum up the attributes of our late friend in a brief phrase I resort to fairly modern terminology and say that without question Eric was a 'collector's collector'. What is meant by that? Well, as a comic actor might be called a 'comedian's comedian' because they would go to see that person perform so Eric would be the man to turn to for the ultimate answer. There are many Bingophiles around with collections that almost defy improvement, but even

they would acknowledge Eric's ability to come up with the definitive answers to alternate takes and rare radio broadcasts barely known to exist. More importantly, Eric was only to pleased to be able to help with this kind of information or taped dubbings without the least thought of personal gain other than the sense of satisfaction from helping a fellow collector. His willingness to assist seemed to know no bounds.

For the past few years Eric had been the principle organiser of 'Cassette Crosby' and 'Tape Evergreen' - speeding off these personalised cassettes for fellow enthusiasts to enjoy and contribute to. For many a unique way to enhance their knowledge and collections and to feel a part of fellowship that is based on one of life's greatest emotional experiences, the love and appreciation of good music.

At the conclusion of his funeral service, significantly attended by several nursing staff from Southend General Hospital, where he had been receiving treatment, two Bing tracks were played. The first by request of Eric himself and the second selected by Wally Oldfield who had prepared the recordings. As Bing's voice filled the chapel with "When I Leave The World Behind" and "Once In A While" may I say that I have never heard these recordings in more appropriate circumstances or to better effect. I'm sure this would echoed by all who attended in a congregation which included several local members of the ICC.

On Saturday, 22nd. June, John Gunn played "Home On The Range" in his Crosby Corner. Although requested by two listeners unconnected with the ICC it seemed a very fitting song to be played in a week which saw the demise of one of the Crosby Circle's keenest members. At the conclusion John reported Eric's passing and ended with the words: "His knowledge of all kinds of vintage music from big bands to Victor Sylvester in addition to Bing and many other singers was quite extraordinary. But beyond all the collecting he was a very pleasant and generous man, and a real pleasure to know. And he'll be very badly missed. Our sympathies go out to his wife, Joan, and the family." Sentiments on which it would be very difficult to improve.

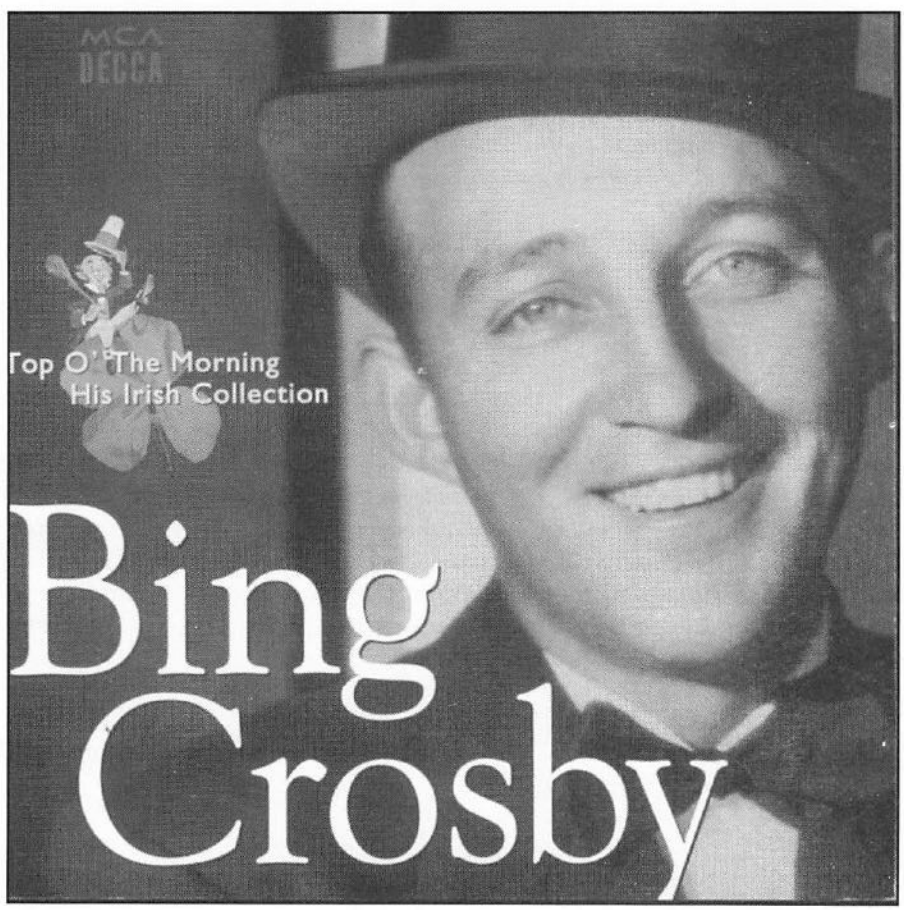
Bert Bishop

Keeping Track

A Compact Disc Review by Jim Reilly

We have an exciting array of discs to review this time around, although some of these were already in the shops shortly after my copy for the April issue had gone to press back in March. You may well therefore be aware of their existence by the time you read these notes. I sincerely hope that you don't have any problems in obtaining copies.

Top O' The Morning / His Irish Collection MCA Records MCAD-11046 **USA**



The contents of this album were listed in the last issue of BING. I am pleased to say I have now heard this marvellous CD and I am very impressed with the sound quality and don't think that you will ever hear the 24 titles sounding any better. It would be worth getting for the title track alone - although Bing was in really fine voice when he recorded all the numbers. It becomes a real collector's item with the inclusion of the original version of 'Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral' which was originally withdrawn due to mechanical problems. Bing re-recorded it a year later in 1945 and although the orchestral arrangements in both versions are almost identical, I wonder if you can spot the changes Bing makes to the lyrics? (If you want to know these refer to the end of my reviews). It seems almost impossible that 'Did Your Mother Come From Ireland' was recorded some 56 years ago and that all the other titles on the CD are over 44 years old. It's just like vintage wine, it gets better with age. I am not from the Emerald Isle myself but I have long enjoyed Bing's Irish songs and if that's also to your taste you won't get a better CD. Congratulations to MCA/Decca for releasing this definitive collection of Irish songs. Let's hope that we get more from their archives, particularly if the quality is as good as this. My congratulations also go to Wig Wiggins for the sleeve notes and for his hard work in helping MCA to put the CD together. I have been in contact with MCA's London office and sadly they tell me that they have no plans in the foreseeable future to release this album in the UK.

Harry Lillis - On Stage - In Mysen, Norway and London
Limited Collectors Edition HLYCD-003 Origin Unknown

MYSEN August 27, 1977

Feels Good Feels Right - Now You Has Jazz - Hallelujah (Joe Bushkin, piano) - The Crosby Medley (I Surrender Dear/ Swinging On A Star/ Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams/ Dear Hearts And Gentle People/ True Love/ Don't Fence Me In/ Pennies From Heaven/ Blue Hawaii/ Sweet Leilani/ Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral/ Just One More Chance/ Them There Eyes/ Moonlight Becomes You/ You Are My Sunshine/ I'll Be Seeing You/ Basin Street Blues/ Accentuate The Positive/ Please/ Baby Face/ South Of The Border/ Galway Bay/ Play A Simple Melody/ Gone Fishin'/ San Fernando Valley/ I Found A Million Dollar Baby/ San Antonio Rose/ I'm An Old Cowhand/ In A Little Spanish Town/ Wait Till The Sun Shines Nellie/ It's Easy To Remember/ It's Been A Long Long Time/ Blue Skies/ White Christmas/ Ol' Man River) - Sail Away From Norway

LONDON PALLADIUM September / October, 1977

Oh Look At Me Now/ I Love A Piano /George Gershwin Medley (all Joe Bushkin, piano)- Everything Old Is New Again / My Cup Runneth Over (both Bing and Kathryn) - The Way We Were - Cuando Calienta El Sol - Noel Coward Medley (Bing, Rosemary Clooney, Kathryn Crosby and Harry Crosby participate in I'll Follow My Secret Heart/ Some Day I'll Find You/ Zigeuner/ Don't Put Your Daughter On The Stage, Mrs Worthington/ Mad About The Boy/ Mad Dogs And Englishmen/ I'll See You Again/ London Pride) -There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About (Parody)

This is the third of the Harry Lillis series CDs and it is great to have extracts from what has become known as the "Oslo Concert" (somehow this sounds better than Mysen) and from those last Palladium appearances in 1977. It is sad to think that Bing passed on such a short time after he sang these songs. With the exception of some extraneous on and off stage noises and a few variations in sound level the quality is really excellent. The Medley Of Hits from the "Oslo Concert" lasts some 33 minutes and is a joy to listen to (if one ignores Harry) and for me it's a real treat to have the Noel Coward Medley on CD. I am sure you will find this CD to be a great addition to your collections. It takes you right back to the Palladium those 19 years ago and I am glad that they also included the Joe Bushkin tracks as this makes it even more authentic. Running Time: 72.17 Price: £11

Bing Crosby - American Legends **Laser Light 12732** **USA**

The Birth Of The Blues
My Ideal
After You've Gone
Pennies From Heaven(w Frances Langford & Louis Armstrong)
Where Is Your Heart
Aren't You Glad You're You
Cabin In The Pines
I Can Dream Can't I (with The Andrews Sisters)
The Song's Gotta Come From The Heart (with J. Durante)
My Melancholy Baby
Till We Meet Again (with Patti Page)

This is a thoroughly enjoyable CD with a mixture of both commercial and radio material. Most of the titles have not appeared on CD too often - 'Cabin In The Pines' makes it's debut and 'Aren't You Glad You're You' that lovely song from 'Going My Way' makes only its second appearance as do 'Where Is Your Heart' and 'The Song's Gotta Come From The Heart'. The quality is good and the sleeve is unusual in that it has a blown up copy of the Bing stamp on the front of the liner which makes it an attractive package. Apparently this is one of a series of albums based on the "American Legends" postage stamps issued by the U.S.P.O. The set of these stamps was made available to members by Michael Crampton some time ago.
Running Time: 40.10 Price: £5.99.

Bing Crosby - Swinging On A Star (2CDs) **Start Entertainments Musketeer MUCD 9515 UK**

(Also available on audio cassette MUCA 9515 - £3.99)

CD1
The White Cliffs Of Dover
Yankee Doodle Dandy

CD2
San Antonio Rose
Dinah

I Don't Want To Walk Without You Baby
You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To
It's All Over Now
As Time Goes By
I'll Be Seeing You
Shoo Shoo Baby
Long Ago And Far Away
Bless'em All
I'll Get By
Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby
Saturday Night (Is The Loneliest Night Of The Week)
Wait For Me Mary
It's Always You
Basin Street Blues
You Belong To My Heart
Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral
Swinging On A Star
Trade Winds
I Love You
Sweet Georgia Brown
You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me
Temptation
Too Marvellous For Words
May I
June In January
With Every Breath I Take
I'm An Old Cowhand
Pennies From Heaven
Mr Gallagher And Mr Shean
You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby
Sunday Monday Or Always
Sierra Sue
Deep In The Heart Of Texas
I'll Be Home For Christmas
White Christmas

This is a very pleasant selection of radio and commercial material; disc one being the radio material. The quality is good and the two CDs are exceptionally good value for £5.99 - at this price it will make a good addition to anyone's collection. Some of the radio tracks have only had only limited exposure on CD whereas the commercial tracks have appeared on a fairly regular basis The sleeve liner has a nice picture of Bing and the notes are well produced although the album title is a little lacking in originality as this is the fifth Bing album entitled 'Swinging On A Star'. I understand that this album is being sold exclusively by Woolworth's and that some people are having difficulty in obtaining it. If this is the case you can write to Brian Atkinson, the Sales and Commercial Manager of Start Audio & Video, Suite 20a, Canada House, Blackburn Road, London NW6 1RZ. who has agreed to sell direct to members Price CD: £5.99 Audio Cassette: £4.99 incl. p&p in UK Running Time: 107:50

Bing Crosby & Friends - The Radio Years **Hallmark 303372** **UK**

If I Knew You Were Coming (with Bob Hope)
On A Slow Boat To China (w Peggy Lee)
When You Wore A Tulip (with Judy Garland)
Moonlight Bay (with Gary Crosby)
I Don't Know Why (I Just Do) (with Lauren Bacall)
The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else (with Al Jolson)
May The Good Lord Bless And Keep You (with Nat King Cole and The Andrews Sisters)
Basin Street Blues (with Ella Fitzgerald)
Hand Holdin' Music (w R Vallee & Walter O'Keefe)
Lazy River / Paper Doll (with The Mills Bros.)
On Top Of Old Smoky (with Burl Ives)
Medley: You're The Top / You Are My Sunshine / Sonny Boy / You're The Top (with Frank Sinatra and Bob Hope)
Clancy Lowered The Boom (with Dennis Day)
Takes Two To Tango (w Rosemary Clooney)
You Came A Long Way From St Louis (with Peggy Lee)
I Can Dream Can't I (withThe Andrews Sisters)
Lullaby Of Broadway (with Dick Powell)
The Surrey With The Fringe On Top (with Helen O'Connell)
Till We Meet Again (with Patti Page)
Groaner, Canary & Nose (w Judy Garland & J Durante)

One tends to get rather blase about this material as so much has been released over the last few years. It is of course still marvellous to hear any Bing radio tracks and if this is new to you, I am sure you will enjoy this selection of great radio material with Bing singing with the who's who of Show Business. Quite a few tracks have only made limited appearances on CD. The price is right and the quality of all tracks is pretty good. You can't really go wrong for £2.99 or £3.99 (depending upon where you are able to purchase it). Running Time: 55.58

Frank & Bing **Boardwalk 503** **Canada**

THE BING CROSBY SHOW (March 21, 1954)
The Jones Boy
Granada
Young At Heart - Frank Sinatra
Among My Souvenirs/ September Song/ As Time Goes By (with Frank Sinatra)
Wanted
THE BING CROSBY SHOW (March 28, 1954)
Oh Baby Mine, I Get So Lonely
Imagination
Take A Chance - Frank Sinatra
Till We Meet Again/ Meet Me Tonight In Dreamland/ There's A Long Long Trail a Winding (w Frank Sinatra)
If You Love Me
RADIO CLUB (May 20, 1953)
September Song - Frank Sinatra
Laura - Frank Sinatra
Night And Day - Frank Sinatra

All this material is from radio; the shows being the General Electric CBS shows for the two dates mentioned and from a RAI Italian radio broadcast from Frank's European tour of 1953. Members may recall that the two Bing Shows were released on LP in 1979 by the Sinatra Society of Australia as a tribute to Bing. I don't think that the quality is up to the standard of Bing's Philco Shows but it is never-the-less acceptable.
The CD tends to be a bit costly at £12.00. Running time: 71.54

Rosie & Bing **Delta Music CD6018** **UK**

Isn't This A Lovely Day
Anything You Can Do
They Say It's Wonderful
You Make Me Feel So Young - Rosemary Clooney
My Heart Is Taking Lessons -Bing
Ain't We Got Fun
Paris Medley:
Any Town Is Paris When You're Young
Paris In The Spring
The Last Time I Saw Paris
April In Paris
Let's Take A Walk Around The Block
Don't Worry About Me - Rosemary Clooney
You're A Sweet Little Headache - Bing
Summertime
Let's Call The Whole Thing Off
People Will Say We're In Love
As Long As I Live - Rosemary Clooney
Hey Look Me Over
They Can't Take That Away From Me
Our Love Affair - Rosemary Clooney
Let's Put Out The Lights

All songs unless otherwise stated are sung by Bing and Rosemary Clooney
The 12 duets are the same as those used on the album "Hey! Look Us Over" which was released in 1993. If you missed the original CD this has the bonus of two additional Bing and four Rosemary Clooney tracks. The quality is fine and all the material used is from air shots. The other difference between this and the earlier album is that the patter between Bing & Rosie is omitted It is very good value for £3.49. Running Time: 44.11

Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings **Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab UDCD 670** **UK**

Mountain Greenery
'Deed I Do
The Song is You
Heat Wave
Cheek To Cheek
Have You Met Miss Jones
The Blue Room
They All Laughed
I've Got Five Dollars
September In The Rain
Nice Work If You Can Get It
Jeepers Creepers

I only learnt of this CD just prior to going to press and will therefore review it in the next issue of BING. I do know that it is exclusively available to members in the UK from Audiophile International Ltd. PO Box 303, Chobham, Surrey, GU24 8YP Price £25 + £2.00 p&p (all orders despatched by first class recorded delivery). I negotiated a 10% (£2.50) discount for UK members but you must confirm your membership of the ICC in order to get it. This is a limited edition 24 carat gold collector's CD with excellent sound quality.

Rosemary Clooney - Rosie Sings Bing **Concord Jazz CCD-4060** **USA**

But Beautiful
Pennies From Heaven
Blue Skies
I Surrender Dear
Where The Blue Of The Night
It's Easy To Remember
Swinging On A Star
Just One More Chance
I Wished On The Moon
Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral

Members will most probably know that this tribute to Bing was issued as an LP in 1978. Rosie makes a pretty good job of these Bing standards and this makes a nice piece of Crosbyana. At the moment this album is only available in the USA Price: $11.99

Bing Crosby's Hawaii DO YOU WANT A COPY?

A number of members have told me that they can't get hold of this album and as a result I have made enquiries and I may be able to assist. If you want copies please write to me on an urgent basis and I'll see what I can do. I will handle any such requests on a first come first served basis. I anticipate that the price would be around £11 plus P+P for orders ouside the UK

Bing Crosby Hawaii Good Music Rec. Co 103820 MCA MSD-35082 (reviewed in BING 109 page 46)

PLEASE NOTE !

Bing Crosby On Radio With Buddy Cole Vol.2. Collectors Issue BCR-02

I didn't make it clear in the last issue that this CD can be obtained by writing to Barry Whittingham:El Rancho Grande 25C Garton Close, Cinderhill, Nottingham NG6 8RZ. Please make your cheques payable to Barry who is handling the distribution. Price: £9.50 including p&p

GUEST APPEARANCES

All The Things You Are (The Jerome Kern Songbook) **Verve CD31452907-2** **USA**

16 Tracks (1 Bing) The Song Is You *surprisingly enough makes it's first appearance on CD*

Bix Beiderbecke **EMI Records CDMFP 6163** **UK**

20 Tracks (1 Bing) Mississippi Mud *Other titles on this album include 'Louisiana', 'Rhythm King' and 'Louise' but Bing is not to be found on these tracks. I mention this as some may be tempted to buy this CD for these titles.*

The First Crooners Vol.2 1930-1934 **Take Two Records TT418CD** **USA**
20 Tracks (1 Bing) Boo Boo Boo
This is the first appearance of this title on CD and the song was used in the film'Too Much Harmony'(1933).
Gentlemen Of Song (2CDs) **Start Entertainments Musketeer MUCD9512** **UK**
40 Tracks (4 Bing) You're A Sweet Little Headache; An Apple For The Teacher; April Played The Fiddle; I Have Eyes
Hits Of '35 **ASV LivingEra CD AJA 5185** **UK**
23 Tracks (1 Bing) From The Top Of Your Head (To The Tip Of Your Toes)
This is the first appearance on CD
Hits Of '45 **ASV Living Era CD AJA 5168** **UK**
25 Tracks (3 Bing) I Can't Begin To Tell You; Baia and Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive
This is the first appearance on CD of 'Baia' with Xavier Cugat & his Waldorf Astoria Orchestra

Top O' The Morning - Did you SPOT the differences?
'Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral' variations in the lyrics: In the first version (1944) Bing sings "me mother" and "if she could sing that song to me this day" and in the 1945 version these become "my mother" and "if I could hear that song of hers today".

FROM MY CRYSTAL BALL: This time of the year is traditionally slow in the record industry and I get no vibes on any future releases. I just wish I could use my crystal ball to better use when choosing my lottery numbers - I'd then be able to spend even more time on the look out for more Bing CDs. I would like to thank Ernest Sutkowski, Charlie Baillie, Leslie Gaylor and Phil Clarke for advising me of new material. Their continued help is greatly appreciated. May I wish you all good listening until next time.

Jim Reilly

ANNOUNCEMENT

The International Crosby Circle
31ST ANNUAL DINNER MEETING
MANSION HOUSE, ROUNDHAY PARK, LEEDS
SUNDAY OCTOBER 6TH 1996 3 PM - 10 PM

A cordial and warm invitation is extended to all ICC members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming meeting and dinner in the attractive setting of Roundhay Park, Leeds

The dinner menu will be :

Cream of leek and potato soup
Baked ham with sugared crust and madeira sauce
Individual strawberry and kiwi pavlova topped with passion fruit and double cream
Coffee and mints
Hand made chocolates and petit fours

Please book by sending a cheque for £14 to Michael Crampton.
Tickets will be available for collection at the meeting.
Accommodation can be obtained by contacting Rydal Bank Hotel
(tel. 0113 266 1178)

Keep It In The Oven

Jim Newell was researching certain things about the early days of radio and browsing through the first volume of Fred Reynolds's wonderful 'The Crosby Collection' series, he came across a reference to Bing's mastery of the carbon microphone. This inspired Jim to pen the following article.

We have all heard of music that is "sweet and hot" but this is ridiculous! Read on.

The year is 1929 (Bing had been recording since October 1926 remember) and radio stations have been springing up all over the United States, all wanting air time and trying to capture the public's listening time. Small radio stations only had one studio flanked by a control room and this control room was where the OVEN was kept. This oven was one of the most important pieces of equipment, since the fine crystals of carbon which carried the voice waves had a tendency to collect moisture and pack down solid during the day. Heat loosened them once more, which explains the use of the oven, so radio programs were often much clearer in the early morning than late at night.

These carbon crystals were inside the microphone (hence the name 'carbon microphone') and it was quite common for the microphone to go dead on the person using it and for the people in the control room to knock on the glass partition separating the engineer from the speaker/singer in the studio and get them to pick up the microphone and give it a jolly good shake to try and loosen the crystals again.
Remembering that this was 1929, imagine if you will in your mind's eye, Bing recording a song and thinking it was OK He is then told that the microphone has gone dead. Picture him picking it up, shaking it and almost trying to throttle it to reawaken the carbon crystals. Who's ever heard of a "One Take Crosby"? After the carbon microphone came the condenser microphone but that's another story.

When you look at your own recording tape decks and compact disc players of today, you tend to forget yesteryear and what it was like, and how lucky we are to have these recordings of those far off days in such good sound quality. It speaks well of the artists and the engineers for their endless patience in getting performances on wax and film as good as they are. The rapid growth of radio can be seen as in 1921, only eighty radio stations were broadcasting. In 1923, three million homes possessed radios but by 1925, this number had expanded to an incredible fifty million. In the USA at the end of the 1920s, no less than 618 radio stations were in operation and coast to coast broadcasting was a reality, giving voice and fame to such personalities as Rudy Vallee, Paul Whiteman and many others.

Crosby's feeling for the radio and the record business was well founded and just look at his output in 1929. On radio this vast new audience, growing larger by the week just took Bing to their hearts and of course into their homes. To quote from Fred Reynolds's book, I am sure that we are all very glad Bing Crosby "mastered the art of the carbon microphone".

W.J. Newell

When Bing Crossed the German Lines in 1944

Roger Osterholm, whose Bio-Bibliography of Bing was published last year, has been carrying out further research into Bing's activities in Europe in 1944. He now shares the results with us.

Bing Crosby's tour of England and the European battle front in 1944 is generally known, but the spot where he once overran the American frontline is badly misunderstood. Bing is partly to blame, for he has stated that the place was Ste. Mere Eglise (or Holy Mother Church). That could not, however, be the actual location, for in September 1944, when Bing was in France, nearly all of France had been liberated. Ste. Mere Eglise is near Normandy and was liberated on June 9, just three days after D-Day. The Falaise Gap was closed by the Allies on August 20, and Paris was liberated August 25.

Bing's troupe landed at Scotland on August 25, 1944, at Cherbourg in France on September 5 (D-Day plus 85), and after passing through Ste. Mere Eglise on September 7, performed in various parts of the country for the next four weeks, giving three shows a day. V-1 buzz bombs were blasting London and Belgium. After enjoying Paris for a few days using General Eisenhower's staff car, Bing returned by ship to New York, arriving on October 12, just in time for his next radio show.

Bing at Ste. Mere Eglise

Bing entered Scotland with Fred Astaire, and in France met Dinah Shore and other celebrities. In his troupe he had comic Joe DeRita (who later became one of the Three Stooges), singer Jean Darrell, dancer Darlene Garner, and guitarist Buck Harris. Bing's favourite songs of the time were 'I'll Be Seeing You', 'Swinging On a Star', 'With a Song In My Heart' and of course 'White Christmas'. Everyone wanted to hear 'White Christmas'. Before he was through with his tour he sang 2500 songs to audiences both very large and very small, sometimes only a thousand yards from the front. This is the image evoked at the opening of the film 'White Christmas' (1954).

Bing's presence at the front was captured by Army combat photographers. The footage was added to the Office of War Information 83-minute feature 'Lest We Forget', a film on the defeat of Nazi Germany. In the middle of the film, Crosby is shown in full Army fatigues, with a khaki stockade cap, floppy with a full brim like a crushed hat, and a wide-open field jacket that displayed a wide, prominent colourful necktie. Bing was never in uniform, and the soldiers liked it that way. Backed by an accordionist and guitarist, Bing is shown on a rude stage in the woods before a large audience of laughing soldiers. They number in the hundreds and stretch out about 75 yards from the stage. Behind Bing on that rude stage in the woods were probably Harris on guitar and, on the accordion, an Army pianist from Glenn Miller's Orchestra, who went across the Channel with Bing. The clips follow shots of two pretty girls, possibly Jean Darrell and Darlene Garner. The narrator introduces the footage by saying "Camp shows and lovelies from back home were catching up with us...Bing came over and lots of others. It made us feel close to the end and even closer to home."

Aired on the Nostalgia TV cable in November 1995, the film was introduced by Jim Harriot, who stated that the film was made in 1945 to inspire the soldiers that continued to fight in the Pacific, but the date at the end of the film is MCMXLVII (1947). Perhaps there was a subsequent release to the American public with the later date. Most of the films by the Office of War Information were exclusively for the Armed Services.

But just where did Bing Crosby outrun the American lines? In mid-September the troops under General Omar Bradley, whom Bing writes that he reported to after the incident, were in eastern France, probing into German territory. He writes that one Sunday after Mass he rode in a jeep with a green lieutenant to entertain small pockets of soldiers at the line. Watching the telephone lines strung along the road, as cautioned earlier by Astaire, Bing soon noticed that the lines disappeared in a town. Bing could see soldiers ahead but suggested that his driver turn around, for he rightly feared the worst. When he returned to headquarters that evening and told General Bradley of the town he had entered, the general replied, "You couldn't have; we haven't taken that town yet." "Well," responded Bing, "we had it for a few moments today."

One town in eastern France, near where the front-line was in the middle of September, sounds like Ste. Mere Eglise, enough to confuse Bing and nearly any other American. From the invasion of Normandy, Ste Mere Eglise was on everyone's tongue and of course Bing had been there on his way east. That eastern town, however, is Ste. Marie aux Mines, across the Moselle, fifty miles southeast of Nancy, and southwest of Strasbourg. This is where fighting continued, 300 miles east of Ste. Mere Eglise.

The fighting was in eastern France in September when Bing was present. British forces reached Arras, 125 miles north of Paris, on the first of the month, and US forces crossed the Meuse River and reached Verdun, 150 miles to the east. Brussels was liberated September 3, the day before the Brits reached Antwerp. The next day the US Army captured Ghent as Canadians surrounded Calais. American troops crossed the Moselle south of Metz on September 7 and entered Luxembourg on the tenth, but Patton's Third Army to the south had to pause to let fuel supplies catch up. His big battle of Metz on the Moselle was a month away.

The American First Army was close to Aachen ahead of schedule and smashed through the Siegfried Line on the fifteenth. Two days later in the north, the abortive Operation Market Garden commenced under Montgomery, seeking a "bridge too far." Germans at Brest surrendered on the twenty-second, and two days later British forces approached the Rhine. On the last day of September, Canadians took Calais.

Bing was with General Bradley's Twelfth Army Group, including the First and Third Armies, when he ran into the German lines. Metz is also in that area of France, about 200 miles east of Paris, on ground then sizzling from battle. Bing often heard the cannon fire ahead. Fighting in rainy weather, by September 16 Patton's forces had destroyed the German forces and 60 tanks at Epinal as they prepared to attack. Ste. Marie aux Mines is 25 miles east of Epinal. Two days later the Germans were attacking Luneville, south-east of Metz and 30 miles northwest of Ste. Marie aux Mines. Allied commanders had a general conference at Verdun on September 20. American forces across the Moselle south of Metz, however, were not reinforced for another month as Metz remained a difficult target.

Bill Mauldin, the famous soldier-cartoonist of the Second World War, mentions Bing's visit in his book Up Front: 1943-44, reprinted in the second volume of journalism during the war, published in late 1995 by the Library of America. Mauldin writes that after "his visit to the French front" Bing Crosby told reporters in America "that entertainment is needed most by the dispirited troops of the rear echelon rather than by the front-line soldiers" (pp. 387-88). On the battle line troops Crosby is supposed to have said, "Morale is sky-high, clothes are cleaner and salutes really snap." Mauldin adds, "The dogfaces who read that dispatch in the foxholes didn't know what front Bing was talking about," and pleaded, "Please, God, don't let anybody become a lecturer on the

front-line conditions until he has spent at least a year talking to the combat men." Of course, eastern France did have an easier time of it, compared to the bulldog grappling earlier in Normandy and in the coming Battle of the Bulge. By November even American generals mistakenly considered the Ardennes as secure. If the report is accurate, Bing's comment could also have been meant more for the homefront, to support and encourage the families of the men in those foxholes.

Incidentally, while researching Second World War shorts, I came across the Army-Navy Screen Magazine No. 12 of early 1943, which gives a hard-to-find detail of Crosby's wartime activities. After two 'articles' on "Standing Room Only" (on the high wartime railroad traffic) and a second titled "On to Fortress Europe," the third and final segment of the short film is titled "Introducing the Hit Kit." It is a 10-minute spot on Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians trying out new songs for the soldiers. The third song attempted is "In My Arms." Waring likes it and tells one of the singers of the Pinups group, "Daisy, come here, come here. Get Crosby on the phone. He'll like this. I'll sing it to him." Daisy asks, "Wait, you're going to sing for Bing?" Waring replies firmly, "Yeah, I'm going to sing for Bing." The announcer states at the opening of the segment that Bing Crosby, Jimmy Dorsey, Dinah Shore, Harry James, and Kate Smith were members of the Hit Kit Committee under Waring's leadership. Jimmy Dorsey had been Bing's musical director on radio in the mid-'30s.

The major effect of the tour of England and France for Bing was his return to America a more serious and sober fellow, who firmly recognised the importance of projecting moral and uplifting qualities in his performances. Bing's voice on 'White Christmas', a song premiered on radio in December 1941, became the most important 'peace song' of the era. The gay playboy of the '20s and '30s was dead and buried, and the new Bing became the only one most people now remember. Although he continued to sing some jazz, his major productions became tender films and romantic ballads. Of course, the new Bing had already begun by 1942, what with his innumerable tours for the armed forces and singing for War Bond sales. The film in which he adopted the persona of an easygoing priest, Going My Way, had been completed by January 1944 and was released May 2, 1944.

J. Roger Osterholm

(Editor: Some detailed research by Roger and based on this we can now probably assume that the day that Bing 'took' Ste. Marie aux Mines was Sunday, September 24, 1944.)

Bing in pen-and-ink

Jon Oye has forwarded another of his drawings of Bing which we have great pleasure in reproducing. My wife is 'into art' and was fascinated to know how Jon obtains his effects. Jon tells me that "the images are created by the cumulative juxtaposition of individual dots. For instance to shade a particular area of a composition, one must group together a greater number of dots than in a relatively light area where the dots are more sparingly distributed. This technique is called stippling. Some artists incorporate lines and solid area of black to enhance (or to reduce the amount of time they must invest in) their stipple drawings, but I generally prefer the pure effect of an all-dot approach. It is a very meticulous, painstaking and time-consuming way to make a drawing, but if one is patient enough, the result can be unique and rewarding (providing the artist doesn't lose all sanity)."

What The Papers Say

A mixed bag from the papers and most items are from recent issues of British newspapers and speak for themselves. Two items are somewhat rarer and come from the Spokane Chronicle of 1923 and 1926. Obviously not good quality in view of the passage of time but fascinating as historical items. The item about the Kathryn Crosby Cookbook was sent to us from Roger Schore who spotted it in Theater Week magazine. Did Bing really have a famous recipe for Pecan Cookies and Apple Cake?

Villagers remember Bing Crosby

HOLIDAYING in the Yorkshire Dales, were happy times for Bing Crosby.

Now, the locals have made him a permanent part of the scenery. For Bing, who died in 1977, has been immortalised in a village banner.

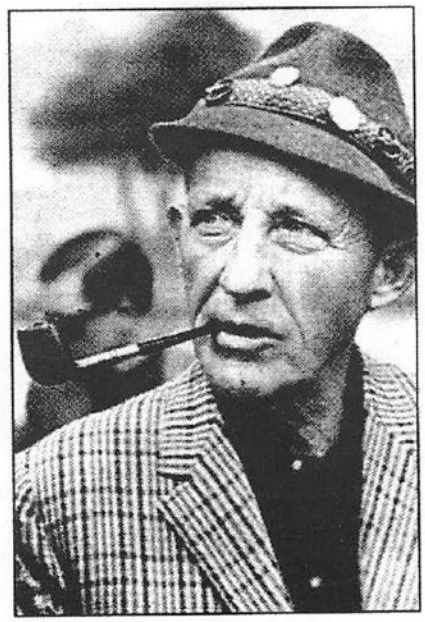
Residents of Kirkby Malzeard created the banner to celebrate the inclusion of their village as one of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

"About 20 years ago, Bing came to North Yorkshire to film," said Audrey MacKenzie, banner co-ordinator.

He enjoyed it so much he came back for holidays and donated money to the villagers to help them develop the local playing fields and cricket pavilion.

THE British company that handcrafted the Rolls-Royce of smokers' pipes has closed with the loss of seven jobs. The Tilshead Pipe Company made pipes for some of the world's most famous pipe smokers, including Bing Crosby, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Tom Selleck.

The demise of Tilshead reflects a continuing decline in popularity since the 1960s, when pipe smoking seemed synonymous with sagacity. There are thought to be fewer than 20 companies making pipes in Britain.



Crosby: smoked a pipe made by Tilshead

Bing of the road

THE article about Kenneth Clarke and thecar number plate "Kil Tax" (*Mirror*, April 20) reminds me of the story behind a car number plate I own, "Bing C".

A New York Supreme Court judge was such a Bing Crosby fan that he applied to the authorities to have car licence plates made up in Bing's name.

He was allowed to keep plates reading "Bing C" for two years.

They were sold on, and I, a life-long Crosby fan, am now the proud owner of the plate.

Leslie Gaylor
Newport, IoW

● *HOPE you're not using it on the road. It's illegal*

The perfect gift for Mother's Day
DIRECT FROM BROADWAY
Kathryn Crosby's State Fair Cookbook
Kathryn's Cookbook contains Bing Crosby's famous recipe for his own Pecan Cookies and Apple Cake
The stars of Rodgers & Hammerstein's STATE FAIR contribute their own favorites: John Davidson's "Carrot Cake", Andrea McArdle's "Shrimp Dip", Tony Award Winner Donna McKechnie's "Balloon-Ka-Boom Banana Nut Bread", Scott Wise's "Heart Racing Potatoes" and Ben Wright's "No Jitters Peach Fritters" (A proven delicacy to calm the nerves!)
Along with Bing's favorite recipes, Kathryn Crosby shares the culinary secrets of the cast and crew of the Broadway hit musical STATE FAIR in her very own "Kathryn Crosby's State Fair Cookbook"
Send $15.75 check or money order (includes shipping) payable to:
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Attn: Kathryn Crosby's Cookbook
226 West 47th St., 8th floor
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KATHRYN CROSBY'S STATE FAIR COOK BOOK
Also on sale at the Music Box Theatre, 239 W. 45th Street
For show tickets call Tele-charge (212) 239-6200
Outside Metro New York (800) 423-7250

HOPE you're not using it on the road. It's illegal

SPOKANE DAILY CHRONICLE.

HAVE COMEDY ROLES IN GONZAGA PLAY

Leading parts in the three-act comedy, "It Pays to Advertise," to be presented by the Gonzaga Dramatic club at the American theater tomorrow night will be assumed by Harry L. Crosby Jr. (left) and Mike Pecarovich (right). Both young men have had considerable experience in thespian endeavors, and both are capable at handling comedy and dramatic situations.

STAGE AND FILM EVENTS

CROSBY, RINKER WIN HOME TOWN

Spokane Boys Who Are Catapulting Into Fame "Get Over" at Liberty.

"Bing" Crosby and "Al" Rinker, two Spokane boys with an unquenchable desire to burst into music and song, last night "arrived" in their home town with presentation of their act at the Liberty midnight matinee.

The two Spokane entertainers left the city a year ago to seek their fortune on the Coast. Gradually reports drifted back to old friends of their marked success before audiences of California. After the manner of friends the reports were discounted considerably, but last night every one in the audience who knew the pair even by sight at once joined the "I knew him when" club.

Rinker plays the piano and adds his bit of vocal acrobatics to the singing of Crosby. About the only innovation from the usual piano and song number of vaudeville is that the piano is only an abridged edition in size and Crosby spices the jazz selections with timely crashes on a diminutive cymbal. It isn't what the boys do, but the way they do it.

Signed by Whiteman.

The pair has been signed by Paul Whiteman and his band to appear on Broadway this winter. After their remarkable reception last night by a "hardboiled" home town audience there is little doubt that they will succeed in the east.

The film feature of the matinee was a preview showing of "We're in the Navy Now," which opened for the regular shows today. The comedy, which stars Wallace Beery and Raymond Hatton, should be one of the outstanding releases of the year.

Laughter fails to die down at a single place in the film. If the situations for mirth are not provided the audience has but to take a glance at Beery or Hatton in their uniforms of sea-going landsmen.

Their latest release easily surpasses their first co-starring success, "Behind the Front," which reached the comedy pinnacle of last year.

BING CROSBY'S GAME 'CALL ME LUCKY'

Bing Crosby's Call Me Lucky game (the title was that of Bing's autobiography, published the previous year) was copyrighted by Parker Brothers in 1954 and was described as the Stage, Screen, Radio and T.V. game. The merchandising trademark was 'Another one of Bing's things'.

The object of the game is to capture opponents' cards and score the highest each player's cards are totalled.

This is a game for 4 players. Each contestant selects a set of cards of the colour, shuffles them and places them down in front of him. This is his Pile.

The first player takes a card from his Draw Pile and lays it face up on top of thing number printed on the board.

players follow in turn clockwise the board. If a 'Lucky 7' turns up on st player's first turn, he must shuffle into his Draw Pile and draw again. ast few plays should be used to cover numbers on the board.

4 If one player's card is adjacent to an opponent's with the same number he may capture it by putting it, together with any cards under it, on top of his opponent's card. A pile of cards is 'owned' by the player whose colour is uppermost.

5 A player may combine cards to make a capture if the values of 2 of his cards adjacent to an opposing card add up to the number on that card.

6 In rules 4 and 5, cards adjacent to the card to be captured may only be used *before* the player uses the Draw Pile.

7 A player may make a capture by using a card from his Draw Pile if it shows

the same number as an opposing card to which *any* card of his colour is adjacent.

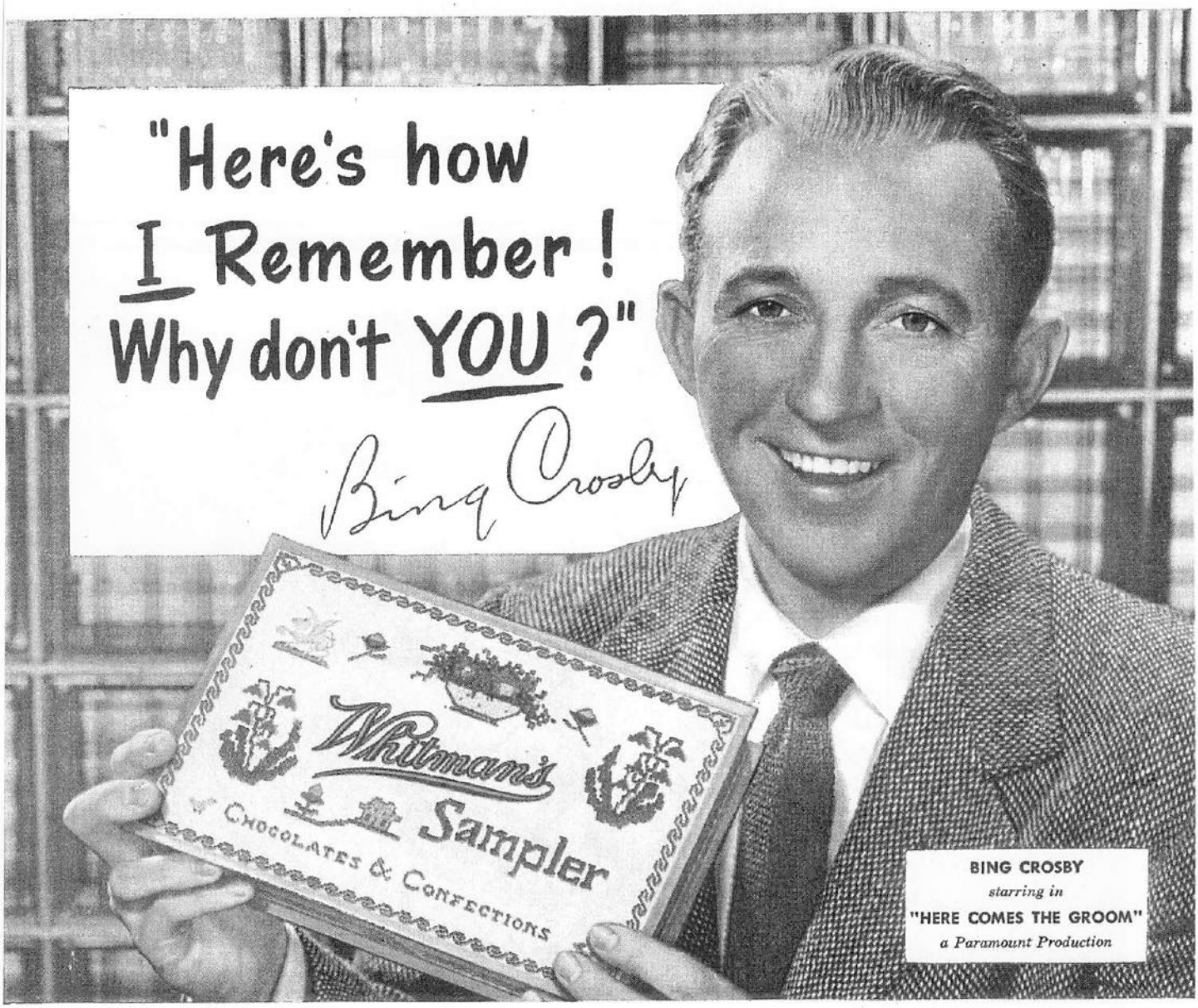
8 The 'Lucky 7' captures any opponent's card or pile on which it is played. It cannot be played on a card of its own colour or on top of another 'Lucky 7', nor can it be combined with any other cards in order capture it. A 'Lucky 7' freezes the ca underneath, and the person playing retains ownership of all the cards in t pile until the game ends.

9 A player must draw a card on each his turns. If a card drawn cannot played, it is out of play, and the turn en

10 When no more plays can be made a all Draw Piles are exhausted, the ga ends. To score, each player adds togeth the face-values of *all* the cards in piles w his colour uppermost and then deducts t amounts of any cards which were laid asi from his total score. The player who sco the highest total wins the game.

"Here's how I Remember! Why don't YOU?"

Bing Crosby



BING CROSBY
starring in
"HERE COMES THE GROOM"
a Paramount Production

Ranged around Bing, on the fence, are (left to right) Gary; Phil, one of the twins; Linny, the youngest; and the other twin, Denny. "One thing they're never 'on the fence' about is the Sampler," says Bing. "They can make one disappear faster than you can say 'Whitman's'!" Like so many people, Bing also chooses the Sampler to bring bedside cheer to friends convalescing in hospital and at home.

"A Sampler puts you in solid!"

"In a family like us Crosbys, a list of just nieces and nephews looks like a small-town phone book. We practically need a department of vital statistics to keep up with the birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, engagements, weddings, and other important events a happy family accumulates. So I've found, and I've passed the good word on to the four boys, that you can get plenty of help on that jolly job of 'remembering'—with a Whitman's Sampler. And a Whitman's Sampler with a suitable sentiment certainly puts you in solid on those happy occasions all our womenfolk hold precious.

"Gary's old enough to have learned that a Whitman's Sampler at the right time can help you make time with the right girl. As for Linny, the Twins and me, we like to have that everlovin' Whitman's Sampler around the house for personal reasons. We just think it's good taste!"

SWEETEST DAY—OCTOBER 20

In addition to the famous Sampler, there is a wide choice of Whitman's packages in a wide price range.

Give

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A WOMAN NEVER FORGETS THE MAN WHO REMEMBERS

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